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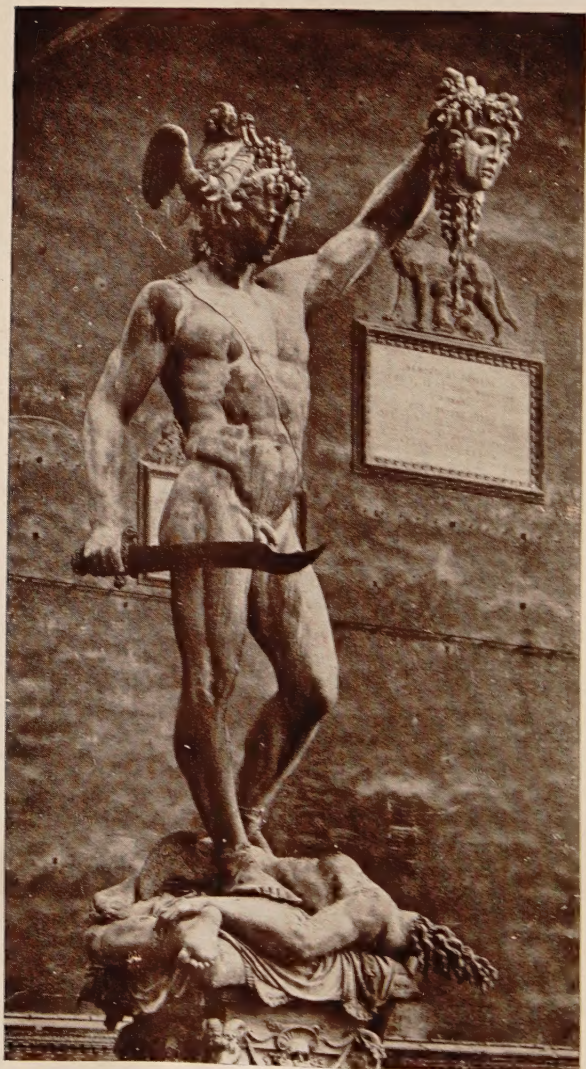


Photo. Alinari

PERSEUS WITH THE HEAD OF MEDUSA
(Benvenuto Cellini)
(see page 454)

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HARPER'S ANTHOLOGY

For College Courses in
Composition and Literature

Prose

Edited by

FREDERICK A. MANCHESTER

WILLIAM F. GIESE

University of Wisconsin



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HARPER'S ANTHOLOGY: *Prose*

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PREFACE

HARPER'S ANTHOLOGY is a series of three volumes: *Prose*, *Poetry*, and an accompanying *Manual of Instruction*. The last-named volume contains a brief statement of general ideas which underlie the collection as an educational instrument, together with some suggestions for its use in relation to composition.

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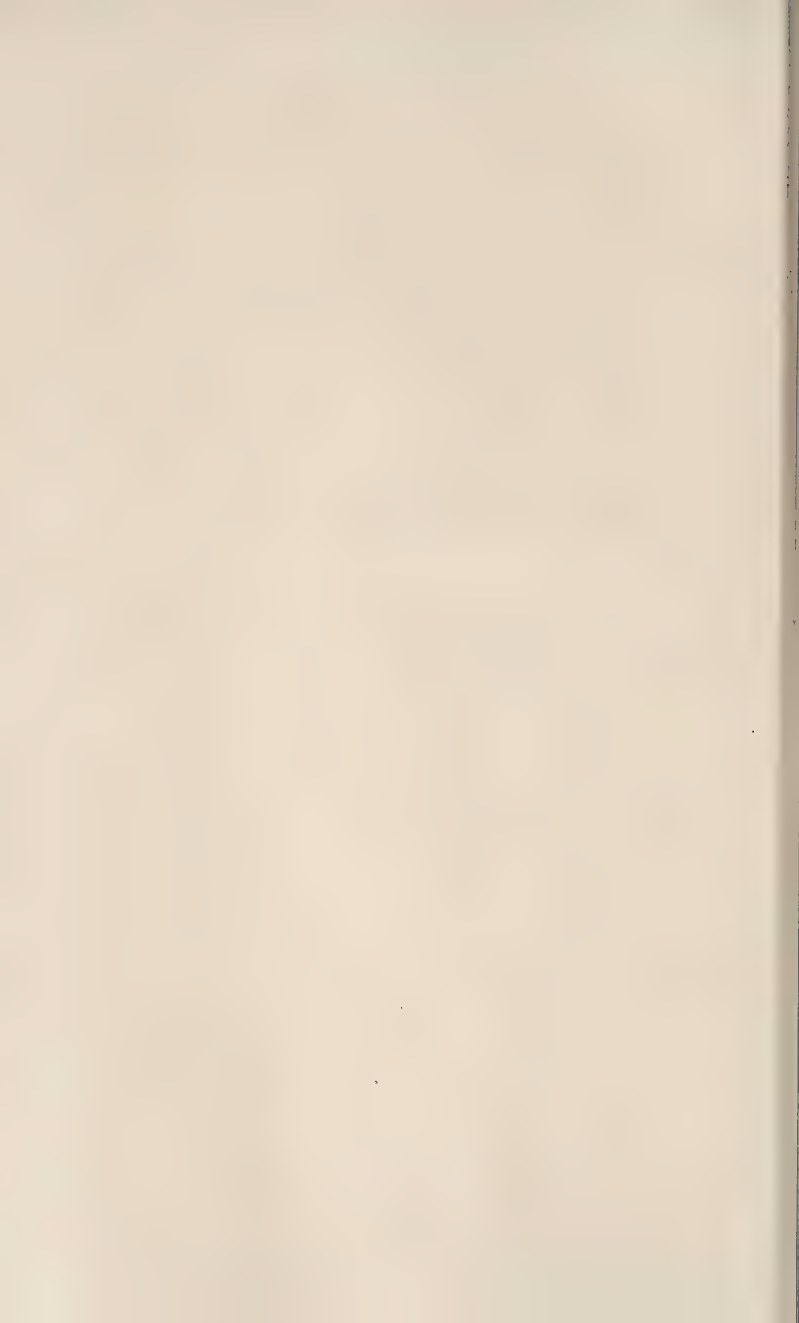
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MADONNA AND CHILD (*Cimabue*)

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MADONNA AND CHILD (*Giotto*)

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IN the notes of this volume, "*Poetry*" is used as an abbreviation for "*Harper's Anthology: Poetry.*"

For explanatory matter in italics preceding an item, or connecting its parts, the present editors are responsible.



I

ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES

*. . . but always and everywhere the proper
study of mankind is man.*

—GOETHE (translated by John
Stuart Blackie)



OF EDUCATION¹*Montaigne*

I

To Madam Diane de Foix, Countess of Gurson:

MADAM, if I had any sufficiency in this subject [the education of children], I could not possibly better employ it than to present my best instructions to the little man that threatens you shortly with a happy birth (for you are too generous to begin otherwise than with a male); for, having had so great a hand in the treaty of your marriage, I have a certain particular right and interest in the greatness and prosperity of the issue that shall spring from it; beside that, your having had the best of my services so long in possession, sufficiently obliges me to desire the honor and advantage of all wherein you shall be concerned. But, in truth, all I understand as to that particular [the subject in hand] is only this, that the greatest and most important difficulty of human science is the education of children. For as in agriculture the husbandry that is to precede planting, as also planting itself, is certain, plain, and well known; but after that which is planted comes to life,

¹ Under this title are here united parts of two essays. The first section is from *Of the Education of Children*, the second from *Of Pedantry*. The text is—substantially—that of the version by Charles Cotton as revised by William Carew Hazlitt, edition of 1902. The introduction to the essay *Of the Education of Children*, following the inscription to Madam Diane de Foix, is omitted. All other omissions, within the limits of the passages reprinted, are indicated in the text, those of less extent than a paragraph by three periods, those of a paragraph or more by a dotted line. Quotations from Latin and Greek authors are given in the translations supplied in the footnotes of the Hazlitt-Cotton *Montaigne*. Other footnotes taken from this work are followed by the name *Hazlitt*, in square brackets. Within the text, parentheses following a quotation inclose the name of the author cited, and square brackets inclose matter inserted by the present editors.

ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES

there is a great deal more to be done, more art to be used, more care to be taken, and much more difficulty to cultivate and bring it to perfection: so it is with men; it is no hard matter to get children; but after they are born, then begins the trouble-solicitude, and care rightly to train, principle, and bring them up. The symptoms of their inclinations in that tender age are so obscure, and the promises so uncertain and fallacious, that it is very hard to establish any solid judgment or conjecture upon them. Look at Cimon, for example, and Themistocles, and a thousand others, who very much deceived the expectation men had of them. Cubs of bears and puppies readily discover their natural inclination; but men, so soon as ever they are grown up, applying themselves to certain habits, engaging themselves in certain opinions, and conforming themselves to particular laws and customs, easily alter, or at least disguise, their true and real disposition; and yet it is hard to force the propension of nature. Whence it comes to pass, that for not having chosen the right course we often take very great pains and consume a good part of our time in training up children to things for which, by their natural constitution, they are totally unfit. In this difficulty, nevertheless, I am clearly of opinion that they ought to be elemented in the best and most advantageous studies, without taking too much notice of or being too superstitious in those light prognostics they give of themselves in their tender years, and to which Plato, in his Republic, gives, methinks, too much authority.

For a boy of quality . . . who pretends to letters not upon the account of profit (for so mean an object as that is unworthy of the grace and favor of the Muses, and, moreover, in it a man directs his service to and depends upon others) nor so much for outward ornament as for his own proper and peculiar use, and to furnish and enrich himself within, having rather a desire to come out an accomplished cavalier than a

ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES

mere scholar or learned man; for such a one, I say, I would . . . have his friends solicitous to find him out a tutor who has rather a well-made than a well-filled head; seeking, indeed, both the one and the other, but rather of the two to prefer manners and judgment to mere learning;—and that this man should exercise his charge after a new method.

'Tis the custom of pedagogues to be eternally thundering in their pupil's ears, as they were pouring into a funnel, whilst the business of the pupil is only to repeat what the others have said: now I would have a tutor to correct this error, and that at the very first he should, according to the capacity he has to deal with, put it to the test, permitting his pupil himself to taste things, and of himself to discern and choose them, sometimes opening the way to him, and sometimes leaving him to open it for himself; that is, I would not have him alone to invent and speak, but that he should also hear his pupil speak in turn. Socrates, and since him Arcesilaus, made first their scholars speak, and then they spoke to them:—

“The authority of those who teach is very often an impediment to those who desire to learn” (Cicero).

It is good to make him, like a young horse, trot before him [the tutor], that he may judge of his going, and how much he is to abate of his own speed to accommodate himself to the rigor and capacity of the other. For want of which due proportion we spoil all; which also to know how to adjust, and to keep within an exact and due measure, is one of the hardest things I know, and 'tis the effect of a high and well-tempered soul to know how to condescend to such puerile motions and to govern and direct them. I walk firmer and more secure up hill than down.

Such as, according to our common way of teaching, undertake, with one and the same lesson, and the same measure of direction, to instruct several boys of differing and unequal

ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES

capacities, are infinitely mistaken; and 'tis no wonder if in a whole multitude of scholars there are not found above two or three who bring away any good account of their time and discipline. Let the master not only examine him [the pupil] about the grammatical construction of the bare words of his lesson, but about the sense and substance of them, and let him judge of the profit he has made, not by the testimony of his memory, but by that of his life. Let him make him put what he has learned into a hundred several forms, and accommodate it to so many several subjects, to see if he yet rightly comprehends it and has made it his own, taking instruction of his progress by the pedagogic institutions of Plato.¹ 'Tis a sign of crudity and indigestion to disgorge what we eat in the same condition it was swallowed; the stomach has not performed its office unless it have altered the form and condition of what was committed to it to concoct. Our minds work only upon trust when bound and compelled to follow the appetite of another's fancy, enslaved and captivated under the authority of another's instruction; we have been so subjected to the trammel that we have no free nor natural pace of our own; our own vigor and liberty are extinct and gone:—

“They never become their own guardians”
(Seneca).

I was privately carried at Pisa to see a very honest man, but so great an Aristotelian that his most usual thesis was: “That the touchstone and square of all solid imagination, and of all truth, was an absolute conformity to Aristotle's doctrine; and that all besides was nothing but inanity and chimera; for that he had seen all, and said all.” A position that for having been a little too injuriously and broadly interpreted brought him once and long kept him in great danger of the Inquisition at Rome.

¹ That is, the pedagogic method followed by Socrates, in the Dialogues of Plato. [Hazlitt.]

ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES

Let him make him examine and thoroughly sift everything he reads, and lodge nothing in his fancy upon simple authority and upon trust. Aristotle's principles will then be no more principles to him than those of Epicurus and the Stoics: let this diversity of opinions be propounded to and laid before him; he will himself choose, if he be able; if not, he will remain in doubt.

"It pleases me to doubt, not less than to know"
(Dante).

For, if he embrace the opinions of Xenophon and Plato by his own reason, they will no more be theirs, but become his own. Who follows another, follows nothing, finds nothing, may, is inquisitive after nothing.

"We are under no king; let each vindicate himself" (Seneca).

Let him, at least, know that he knows. It will be necessary that he imbibe their knowledge, not that he be corrupted with their precepts; and no matter if he forget where he had his learning, provided he know how to apply it to his own use. Truth and reason are common to everyone, and are no more his who spake them first than his who speaks them after: 'tis no more according to Plato than according to me, since both he and I equally see and understand them. Bees cull their several sweets from this flower and that blossom, here and there where they find them, but themselves afterwards make the honey, which is all and purely their own, and no more thyme and marjoram: so the several fragments he borrows from others, he will transform and shuffle together to compile a work that shall be absolutely his own; that is to say, his judgment: his instruction, labor, and study tend to nothing else but to form that. He is not obliged to discover whence he got the materials that have assisted him, but only to produce what he has

ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES

himself done with them. Men that live upon pillage and borrowing expose their purchases and buildings to everyone's view: but do not proclaim how they came by the money. We do not see the fees and perquisites of a gentleman of the long robe;¹ but we see the alliances wherewith he fortifies himself and his family, and the titles and honors he has obtained for him and his. No man divulges his revenue, or, at least, which way it comes in: but everyone publishes his acquisitions. The advantages of our study are to become better and more wise. 'Tis, says Epicharmus, the understanding that sees and hears, 'tis the understanding that improves everything, that orders everything, and that acts, rules, and reigns: all other faculties are blind, and deaf, and without soul. And certainly we render it timorous and servile, in not allowing it the liberty and privilege to do anything of itself. Whoever asked his pupil what he thought of grammar and rhetoric, or of such and such a sentence of Cicero? Our masters stick them, full feathered, in our memories, and there establish them like oracles, of which the letters and syllables are of the substance of the thing. To know by rote is no knowledge, and signifies no more but only to retain what one has intrusted to our memory. That which a man rightly knows and understands, he is the free disposer of at his own full liberty, without any regard to the author from whence he had it, or fumbling over the leaves of his book. A mere bookish learning is a poor, paltry learning; it may serve for ornament, but there is yet no foundation for any superstructure to be built upon it, according to the opinion of Plato, who says that constancy, faith, and sincerity are the true philosophy, and the other sciences, that are directed to other ends, mere adulterate paint. I could wish that Paluel or Pompey, those two noted dancers of my time, could have taught us to cut capers by only seeing them do it, without stirring from our places, as these

¹ That is, of a lawyer.

ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES

men ["our masters"] pretend to inform the understanding without ever setting it to work; or that we could learn to ride, handle a pike, touch a lute, or sing, without the trouble of practice, as these attempt to make us judge and speak well, without exercising us in judging or speaking. Now in this initiation of our studies in their progress, whatsoever presents itself before us is book sufficient; a roguish trick of a page, a sottish mistake of a servant, a jest at the table, are so many new subjects.

And for this reason, conversation with men is of very great use, and travel into foreign countries; not to bring back (as most of our young *monsieurs* do) an account only of how many paces Santa Rotonda is in circuit; or of the richness of Signora Livia's petticoats; or, as some others, how much Nero's face, in a statue in such an old ruin, is longer and broader than that made for him on some medal; but to be able chiefly to give an account of the humors, manners, customs, and laws of those nations where he [the traveling pupil] has been, and that we may whet and sharpen our wits by rubbing them against those of others. I would that a boy should be sent abroad very young, and first, so as to kill two birds with one stone, into those neighboring nations whose language is most differing from our own, and to which, if it be not formed betimes, the tongue will grow too stiff to bend.

And also 'tis the general opinion of all, that a child should not be brought up in his mother's lap. Mothers are too tender, and their natural affection is apt to make the most discreet of them all so overfond, that they can neither find in their hearts to give them [their sons] due correction for the faults they may commit, nor suffer them to be inured to hardships and hazards, as they ought to be. They will not endure to see them return all dust and sweat from their exercise, to drink cold drink when they are hot, nor see them mount an unruly horse, nor take a foil in hand against a rude fencer, nor so much

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as to discharge a carbine. And yet there is no remedy; whoever will breed a boy to be good for anything when he comes to be a man, must by no means spare him when young, and must very often transgress the rules of physic:—

“Let him lead his life in the open air, and in business” (Horace).

It is not enough to fortify his soul; you are also to make his sinews strong; for the soul will be oppressed if not assisted by the members, and would have too hard a task to discharge two offices alone. I know very well to my cost how much mine groans under the burden, from being accommodated with a body so tender and indisposed as eternally leans and presses upon her; and often in my reading perceive that our masters, in their writings, make examples pass for magnanimity and fortitude of mind which really are rather toughness of skin and hardness of bones; for I have seen men, women, and children naturally born of so hard and insensible a constitution of body, that a sound cudgeling has been less to them than a flirt with a finger would have been to me, and that would neither cry out, wince, nor shrink, for a good swinging beating; and when wrestlers counterfeited the philosophers in patience, 'tis rather strength of nerves than stoutness of heart. Now to be inured to undergo labor is to be accustomed to endure pain:—

“Labor hardens us against pain” (Cicero).

A boy is to be broken in to the toil and roughness of exercise, so as to be trained up to the pain and suffering of dislocations, cholics, cauteries, and even imprisonment and the rack itself; for he may come by misfortune to be reduced to the worst of these, which (as this world goes) is sometimes inflicted on the good as well as the bad. As for proof, in our present civil war whoever draws his sword against the laws threatens the honestest men with the whip and the halter.

ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES

And, moreover, by living at home, the authority of this governor, which ought to be sovereign over the boy he has received into his charge, is often checked and hindered by the presence of parents; to which may also be added, that the respect the whole family pay him, as their master's son, and the knowledge he has of the estate and greatness he is heir to, are, in my opinion, no small inconveniences in these tender years.

And yet, even in this conversing with men I spoke of but now, I have observed this vice, that instead of gathering observations from others we make it our whole business to lay ourselves open to them, and are more concerned how to expose and set out our own commodities than how to increase our stock by acquiring new. Silence, therefore, and modesty are very advantageous qualities in conversation. One should, therefore, train up this boy to be sparing and an husband of his knowledge when he has acquired it; and to forbear taking exceptions at or reproving every idle saying or ridiculous story that is said or told in his presence; for it is a very unbecoming rudeness to carp at everything that is not agreeable to our own palate. Let him be satisfied with correcting himself, and not seem to condemn everything in another he would not do himself, nor dispute it as against common customs:—

“Let us be wise without ostentation, without envy”
(Seneca).

Let him avoid these vain and uncivil images of authority, this childish ambition of coveting to appear better bred and more accomplished than he really will, by such carriage, discover himself to be;—and, as if opportunities of interrupting and reprehending were not to be omitted, to desire thence to derive the reputation of something more than ordinary. For as it becomes none but great poets to make use of the poetical license, so it is intolerable for any but men of great and

illustrious souls to assume privilege above the authority of custom:—

“If Socrates and Aristippus have committed any act against manners and custom, let him not think that he is allowed to do the same; for it was by great and divine benefits that they obtained this privilege” (Cicero).

Let him be instructed not to engage in discourse or dispute but with a champion worthy of him, and, even there, not to make use of all the little subtleties that may seem pat for his purpose, but only such arguments as may best serve him. Let him be taught to be curious in the election and choice of his reasons, to abominate impertinence, and consequently to affect brevity; but, above all, let him be lessoned to acquiesce and submit to truth so soon as ever he shall discover it, whether in his opponent's argument, or upon better consideration of his own; for he shall never be preferred to the chair for a mere clatter of words and syllogisms, and is no further engaged to any argument whatever than as he shall in his own judgment approve it: nor yet is arguing a trade, where the liberty of recantation and getting off upon better thoughts, are to be sold for ready money:—

“Neither is he driven by any necessity, that he should defend all things that are prescribed and enjoined him” (Cicero).

.

Let his conscience and virtue be eminently manifest in his speaking, and have only reason for their guide. Make him understand that to acknowledge the error he shall discover in his own argument, though only found out by himself, is an effect of judgment and sincerity, which are the principal things he is to seek after; that obstinacy and contention are common qualities, most appearing in mean souls; that to revise and correct himself, to forsake an unjust argument in the height

and heat of dispute, are rare, great, and philosophical qualities. Let him be advised, being in company, to have his eye and ear in every corner; for I find that the places of greatest honor are commonly seized upon by men that have least in them, and that the greatest fortunes are seldom accompanied with the ablest parts. I have been present when, whilst they at the upper end of the chamber have been only commenting the beauty of the arras, or the flavor of the wine, many things that have been very finely said at the lower end of the table have been lost and thrown away. Let him examine every man's talent; a peasant, a bricklayer, a passenger: one may learn something from every one of these in their several capacities, and something will be picked out of their discourse whereof some use may be made at one time or another; nay, even the folly and impertinence of others will contribute to his instruction. By observing the graces and manners of all he sees, he will create to himself an emulation of the good, and a contempt of the bad.

Let an honest curiosity be suggested to his fancy of being inquisitive after everything; whatever there is singular and rare near the place where he is, let him go and see it; a fine house, a noble fountain, an eminent man, the place where a battle has been anciently fought, the passages of Cæsar and Charlemagne [that is, the localities traversed by them]:—

“What country is bound in frost, what land is friable with heat, what wind serves fairest for Italy” (Propertius).

Let him inquire into the manners, revenues, and alliances of princes, things in themselves very pleasant to learn and very useful to know.

In this conversing with men, I mean also, and principally, those who only live in the records of history; he shall, by reading those books, converse with the great and heroic souls

of the best ages. 'Tis an idle and vain study to those who make it so by doing it after a negligent manner, but to those who do it with care and observation, 'tis a study of inestimable fruit and value; and the only study, as Plato reports, that the Lacedæmonians reserved to themselves. What profit shall he not reap as to the business of men by reading the *Lives* of Plutarch? But, withal, let my governor remember to what end his instructions are principally directed, and that he do not so much imprint in his pupil's memory the date of the ruin of Carthage, as the manners of Hannibal and Scipio; nor so much where Marcellus died, as why it was unworthy of his duty that he died there. Let him not teach him so much the narrative parts of history as to judge them; the reading of them, in my opinion, is a thing that of all others we apply ourselves unto with the most differing measure. I have read a hundred things in Livy that another has not, or not taken notice of, at least; and Plutarch has read a hundred more there than ever I could find, or than, peradventure, that author ever wrote; to some it is merely a grammar study, to others the very anatomy of philosophy, by which the most abstruse parts of our human nature penetrate. There are in Plutarch many long discourses very worthy to be carefully read and observed, for he is, in my opinion, of all others the greatest master in that kind of writing; but there are a thousand others which he has only touched and glanced upon, where he only points with his finger to direct us which way we may go if we will, and contents himself sometimes with giving only one brisk hit in the nicest article of the question, whence we are to grope out the rest. As, for example, where he says that the inhabitants of Asia came to be vassals to one only, for not having been able to pronounce one syllable, which is No. . . . Only to see him pick out a light action in a man's life, or a mere word that does not seem to amount even to that, is itself a whole discourse. 'Tis to our prejudice that men of under-

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standing should so immoderately affect brevity; no doubt their reputation is the better by it, but in the meantime we are the worse. Plutarch had rather we should applaud his judgment than commend his knowledge, and had rather leave us with an appetite to read more, than glutted with that we have already read. He knew very well that a man may say too much even upon the best subjects, and that Alexandridas justly reproached him who made very good but too long speeches to the Ephori, when he said: "O stranger! thou speakest the things thou shouldst speak, but not as thou shouldst speak them." Such as have lean and spare bodies stuff themselves out with clothes; so they who are defective in matter endeavor to make amends with words.

Human understanding is marvelously enlightened by daily conversation with men, for we are, otherwise, compressed and heaped up in ourselves, and have our sight limited to the length of our own noses. One asking Socrates of what country he was, he did not make answer, of Athens, but of the world; he whose imagination was fuller and wider embraced the whole world for his country, and extended his society and friendship to all mankind; not as we do, who look no farther than our feet. When the vines of my village are nipped with the frost, my parish priest presently concludes that the indignation of God is gone out against all the human race, and that the cannibals have already got the pip. Who is it that seeing the havoc of these civil wars of ours does not cry out that the machine of the world is near dissolution and that the day of judgment is at hand; without considering that many worse things have been seen, and that in the meantime people are very merry in a thousand other parts of the earth for all this? For my part, considering the license and impunity that always attend such commotions, I wonder they are so moderate and that there is no more mischief done. To him who feels the hailstones patter about his ears, the whole hemi-

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sphere appears to be in storm and tempest; like the ridiculous Savoyard, who said very gravely, that if that simple king of France could have managed his fortune as he should have done, he might in time have come to be steward of the household to the duke his master: the fellow could not, in his shallow imagination, conceive that there could be anything greater than a Duke of Savoy. And, in truth, we are all of us, insensibly, in this error, an error of a very great weight and very pernicious consequence. But whoever shall represent to his fancy, as in a picture, that great image of our mother nature, in her full majesty and luster, whoever in her face shall read so general and so constant a variety, whoever shall observe himself in that figure, and not himself but a whole kingdom, no bigger than the least touch or prick of a pencil in comparison of the whole, that man alone is able to value things according to their true estimate and grandeur.

This great world which some do yet multiply as several species under one genus, is the mirror wherein we are to behold ourselves, to be able to know ourselves as we ought to do in the true bias. In short, I would have this to be the book my young gentleman should study with the most attention. So many humors, so many sects, so many judgments, opinions, laws, and customs, teach us to judge aright of our own, and inform our understanding to discover its imperfection and natural infirmity, which is no trivial speculation. So many mutations of states and kingdoms, and so many turns and revolutions of public fortune, will make us wise enough to make no great wonder of our own. So many great names, so many famous victories and conquests drowned and swallowed in oblivion, render our hopes ridiculous of eternizing our names by the taking of half a score of light horse, or a hen-roost, which only derives its memory from its ruin. The pride and arrogance of so many foreign pomps, the inflated majesty of so many courts and grandeurs, accustom and fortify our

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sight without closing our eyes to behold the luster of our own; so many trillions of men, buried before us, encourage us not to fear to go seek such good company in the other world: and so of the rest. Pythagoras was wont to say that our life resembles the great and populous assembly of the Olympic games, wherein some exercise the body, that they may carry away the glory of the prize: others bring merchandise to sell for profit: there are also some (and those none of the worst sort) who pursue no other advantage than only to look on, and consider how and why everything is done, and to be spectators of the lives of other men, thereby the better to judge of and regulate their own.

To examples may fitly be applied all the profitable discourses of philosophy, to which all human actions, as to their best rule, ought to be especially directed: a scholar shall be taught to know:—

“What we are, and to what life we are begotten; what it is right to wish; what is the use of new money; how much it becomes us to give to our country and dear kindred; whom the Deity has commanded thee to be; and in what human part thou art placed” (Persius);

what it is to know, and what to be ignorant; what ought to be the end and design of study; what valor, temperance, and justice are; the difference betwixt ambition and avarice, servitude and subjection, license and liberty; by what token a man may know true and solid contentment; how far death, affliction, and disgrace are to be apprehended:—

“And how you may shun or sustain every hardship” (Virgil);

by what secret springs we move, and the reason of our various agitations and irresolutions: for methinks the first doctrine with which one should season his understanding ought to be that

which regulates his manners and his sense; that teaches him to know himself, and how both well to die and well to live. Amongst the liberal sciences [that is, liberal branches of knowledge], let us begin with that which makes us free; not that they do not all serve in some measure to the instruction and use of life, as all other things in some sort also do; but let us make choice of that which directly and professedly serves to that end. If we are once able to restrain the offices of human life within their just and natural limits, we shall find that most of the sciences in use are of no great use to us, and even in those that are, that there are many very unnecessary cavities and dilatations which we had better let alone, and, following Socrates' direction, limit the course of our studies to those things only where is a true and real utility:—

“Dare to be wise; begin! he who defers the hour of living well is like the clown, waiting till the river shall have flowed out: but the river still flows, and will flow for ever” (Horace).

’Tis a great foolery to teach our children:—

“What influence Pisces have, or the sign of angry Leo, or Capricorn, washed by the Hesperian wave” (Propertius);

the knowledge of the stars and the motion of the eighth sphere before their own:—

“What care I about the Pleiades or the stars of Taurus?” (Anacreon).

Anaximenes writing to Pythagoras, “To what purpose,” said he, “should I trouble myself in searching out the secrets of the stars, having death or slavery continually before my eyes?” for the kings of Persia were at that time preparing to invade his country. Everyone ought to say thus, “Being assaulted as I am by ambition, avarice, temerity, superstition, and having

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within so many other enemies of life, shall I go cudgel my brains about the world's revolutions?"¹

After having taught him what will make him more wise and good, you may then entertain him with the elements of logic, physics, geometry, rhetoric; and the science which he shall then himself most incline to, his judgment being beforehand formed and fit to choose, he will quickly make his own. The way of instructing him ought to be sometimes by discourse, and sometimes by reading; sometimes his governor shall put the author himself, which he shall think most proper for him, into his hands, and sometimes only the marrow and substance of it; and if himself be not conversant enough in books to turn to all the fine discourses the books contain for his purpose, there may some man of learning be joined to him, that upon every occasion shall supply him with what he stands in need of, to furnish it to his pupil. And who can doubt but that this way of teaching is much more easy and natural than that of Gaza,² in which the precepts are so intricate, and so harsh, and the words so vain, lean, and insignificant, that there is no hold to be taken of them, nothing that quickens and elevates the wit and fancy, whereas here the mind has what to feed upon and to digest. This fruit, therefore, is not only without comparison much more fair and beautiful; but will also be much more early ripe.

'Tis a thousand pities that matters should be at such a pass in this age of ours, that philosophy, even with men of understanding, should be looked upon as a vain and fantastic name, a thing of no use, no value, either in opinion or effect; of which I think those ergotisms and petty sophistries, by prepossessing the avenues to it, are the cause. And people are

¹ With the views here expressed regarding the place of astronomical studies may be compared related ideas of Pascal, pp. 322f., below; of Goethe, pp. 362f., below; of Coventry Patmore, in the poem "The Two Deserts," *Poetry*, p. 735;—also certain implications of the essay immediately following—"A Speech at Eton."

² Theodore Gaza, rector of the Academy of Ferrara. [Hazlitt.]

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much to blame to represent it to children for a thing of so difficult access, and with such a frowning, grim, and formidable aspect. Who is it that has disguised it thus, with this false, pale, and ghostly countenance? There is nothing more airy, more gay, more frolic, and I had like to have said, more wanton. She preaches nothing but feasting and jollity; a melancholic, anxious look shows that she does not inhabit there. Demetrius the grammarian finding in the temple of Delphos a knot of philosophers set chatting together, said to them, "Either I am much deceived, or by your cheerful and pleasant countenances you are engaged in no very deep discourse." To which one of them, Heracleon the Megarean, replied: "'Tis for such as are puzzled about inquiring whether the future tense of the verb *ballo* be spelt with a double *l*, or that hunt after the derivation of the comparatives *cheiron* and *beltion*, and the superlatives *cheiriston* and *beltiston*,¹ to knit their brows whilst discoursing of their science; but as to philosophical discourses, they always divert and cheer up those that entertain them, and never deject them or make them sad."—²

"You may discern the torments of mind lurking in a sick body; you may discern its joys: either expression the face assumes from the mind" (Juvenal).

The soul that lodges philosophy ought to be of such a constitution of health as to render the body in like manner healthful too; she ought to make her tranquillity and satisfaction shine so as to appear without, and her contentment ought to fashion the outward behavior to her own mold, and consequently to fortify it with a graceful confidence, an active and joyous carriage, and a serene and contented countenance. The most manifest sign of wisdom is a continual cheerfulness; her state is like that of things in the regions above the moon,

¹ The examples used are all Greek words. (Likewise *tupto*, below, p. 32.)

² Compare "Comus," *Poetry*, p. 423, "How charming is divine philosophy!" etc. (The parallel is noted in the Hazlitt-Cotton *Montaigne*.)

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always clear and serene. 'Tis Baroco and Baraliopton¹ that render their disciples so dirty and ill-favored, and not she; they do not so much as know her but by hearsay. What! It is she that calms and appeases the storms and tempests of the soul, and who teaches famine and fevers to laugh and sing; and that, not by certain imaginary epicycles, but by natural and manifest reasons. She has virtue for her end, which is not, as the schoolmen say, situate upon the summit of a perpendicular, rugged, inaccessible precipice: such as have approached her find her, quite on the contrary, to be seated in a fair, fruitful, and flourishing plain, whence she easily discovers all things below; to which place anyone may, however, arrive, if he know but the way, through shady, green, and sweetly-flourishing avenues, by a pleasant, easy, and smooth descent, like that of the celestial vault. 'Tis for not having frequented this supreme, this beautiful, triumphant, and amiable, this equally delicious and courageous virtue, this so professed and implacable enemy to anxiety, sorrow, fear, and constraint, who, having nature for her guide, has fortune and pleasure for her companions, that they have gone, according to their own weak imagination, and created this ridiculous, this sorrowful, querulous, spiteful, threatening, terrible image of it to themselves and others, and placed it upon a rock apart, amongst thorns and brambles, and made of it a hobgoblin to affright people.

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Such a tutor ["the governor that I would have, that is, such a one as knows it to be his duty to possess his pupil with as much or more affection than reverence to virtue"] will make a pupil digest this new lesson, that the height and value of true virtue consists in the facility, utility, and pleasure of its exercise; so far from difficulty, that boys, as well as men, and the innocent as well as the subtle, may make it their own; it

¹ Two terms of the ancient scholastic logic. [Hazlitt.]

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is by order, and not by force, that it is to be acquired. Socrates, her first minion, is so averse to all manner of violence as totally to throw it aside, to slip into the more natural facility of her own progress; 'tis the nursing mother of all human pleasures, who in rendering them just, renders them also pure and permanent; in moderating them, keeps them in breath and appetite; in interdicting those which she herself refuses, whets our desire to those that she allows; and, like a kind and liberal mother, abundantly allows all that nature requires, even to satiety, if not to lassitude; unless we mean to say that the regimen which stops the toper before he has drunk himself drunk, the glutton before he has eaten to a surfeit, and the lecher before he has got diseased, is an enemy to pleasure. If the ordinary fortune fail, she does without it, and forms another, wholly her own, not so fickle and unsteady as the other. She can be rich, be potent and wise, and knows how to lie upon soft perfumed beds: she loves life, beauty, glory, and health; but her proper and peculiar office is to know how to regulate the use of all these good things, and how to lose them without concern: an office much more noble than troublesome; and without which the whole course of life is unnatural, turbulent, and deformed, and there it is indeed that men may justly represent those monsters upon rocks and precipices.

If this pupil shall happen to be of so contrary a disposition that he had rather hear a tale of a tub than the true narrative of some noble expedition or some wise and learned discourse; who at the beat of drum that excites the youthful ardor of his companions leaves that to follow another that calls to a morris or the bears; who would not wish, and find it more delightful and more excellent, to return all dust and sweat victorious from a battle, than from tennis or from a ball, with the prize of those exercises; I see no other remedy but that he be bound prentice in some good town to learn to make minced pies, though he were the son of a duke; accord-

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ing to Plato's precept, that children are to be placed out and disposed of, not according to the wealth, qualities, or condition of the father, but according to the faculties and the capacity of their own souls.

Since philosophy is that which instructs us to live, and that infancy has there its lessons as well as other ages, why is it not communicated to children betimes?—

“The clay is moist and soft: now, now make haste,
and form the pitcher on the rapid wheel” (Persius).

They begin to teach us to live when we have almost done living. A hundred students have got diseased before they have come to read Aristotle's lecture on temperance. Cicero said that though he should live two men's ages he should never find leisure to study the lyric poets; and I find these sophisters yet more deplorably unprofitable. The boy we would breed has a great deal less time to spare; he owes but the first fifteen or sixteen years of his life to education; the remainder is due to action. Let us, therefore, employ that short time in necessary instruction. Away with the thorny subtleties of dialectics; they are abuses, things by which our lives can never be amended: take the plain philosophical discourses, learn how rightly to choose, and then rightly to apply them; they are more easy to be understood than one of Boccaccio's novels; a child from nurse is much more capable of them than of learning to read or to write. Philosophy has discourses proper for childhood, as well as for the decrepit age of men.

I am of Plutarch's mind, that Aristotle did not so much trouble his great disciple with the knack of forming syllogisms, nor with the elements of geometry, as with infusing into him good precepts concerning valor, prowess, magnanimity, temperance, and the contempt of fear; and with this ammunition, sent him, whilst yet a boy, with no more than thirty thousand foot, four thousand horse, and but forty-two thousand crowns,

to subjugate the empire of the whole earth. For the other arts and sciences, he says, Alexander highly indeed commended their excellence and charm, and had them in very great honor and esteem, but not ravished with them to that degree as to be tempted to affect the practice of them in his own person:—

“Seek hence [that is, from philosophy], young men and old men, a certain end to the mind, and a *viaticum* for miserable gray hairs” (Persius).

Epicurus, in the beginning of his letter to Meniceus, says, “That neither the youngest should refuse to philosophize, nor the oldest grow weary of it.” Who does otherwise, seems tacitly to imply that either the time of living happily is not yet come, or that it is already past. And yet, for all that, I would not have this pupil of ours imprisoned and made a slave to his book; nor would I have him given up to the morosity and melancholic humor of a sour ill-natured pedant; I would not have his spirit cowed and subdued by applying him to the rack and tormenting him, as some do, fourteen or fifteen hours a day, and so make a pack-horse of him. Neither should I think it good, when by reason of a solitary and melancholic complexion he is discovered to be overmuch addicted to his book, to nourish that humor in him; for that renders him unfit for civil conversation, and diverts him from better employments. And how many have I seen in my time totally brutified by an immoderate thirst after knowledge? Carneades was so besotted with it that he would not find time so much as to comb his head or to pare his nails. Neither would I have his generous manners spoiled and corrupted by the incivility and barbarism of those of another. The French wisdom was anciently turned into proverb, “Early, but of no continuance.” And, in truth, we yet see that nothing can be more ingenious and pleasing than the children of France; but they ordinarily deceive the hope and expectation that have been conceived of

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them, and grown up to be men have nothing extraordinary or worth taking notice of: I have heard men of good understanding say, these colleges of ours to which we send our young people (and of which we have but too many) make them such animals as they are.

But to our little monsieur, a closet, a garden, the table, his bed, solitude, and company, morning and evening, all hours shall be the same, and all places to him a study; for philosophy, who as the formatrix of judgment and manners shall be his principal lesson, has that privilege to have a hand in everything. The orator Isocrates, being at a feast entreated to speak of his art, all the company were satisfied with and commended his answer: "It is not now a time," said he, "to do what I can do; and that which it is now time to do, I cannot do." For to make orations and rhetorical disputes in a company met together to laugh and make good cheer, had been very unseasonable and improper, and as much might have been said of all the other sciences. But as to what concerns philosophy, that part of it at least that treats of man, and of his offices and duties, it has been the common opinion of all wise men, that, out of respect to the sweetness of her conversation, she is ever to be admitted in all sports and entertainments. And Plato, having invited her to his feast,¹ we see after how gentle and obliging a manner, accommodated both to time and place, she entertained the company, though in a discourse of the highest and most important nature:—

"It profits poor and rich alike, and, neglected, will equally hurt old and young" (Horace).

By this method of instruction my young pupil will be much more and better employed than his fellows of the college are. But as the steps we take in walking to and fro in a gallery, though three times as many, do not tire a man so much as

¹ That celebrated in Plato's dialogue *The Symposium*.

those we employ in a formal journey, so our lesson, as it were accidentally occurring, without any set obligation of time or place, and falling naturally into every action, will insensibly insinuate itself. By which means our very exercises and recreations, running, wrestling, music, dancing, hunting, riding and fencing, will prove to be a good part of our study. I would have his outward fashion and mien and the disposition of his limbs formed at the same time with his mind. 'Tis not a soul, 'tis not a body, that we are training up, but a man, and we ought not to divide him. And, as Plato says, we are not to fashion one without the other, but make them draw together like two horses harnessed to a coach. By which saying of his, does he not seem to allow more time for, and to take more care of, exercises for the body, and to hold that the mind, in a good proportion, does her business at the same time too?

All singularity in our manners and conditions is to be avoided, as inconsistent with civil society. Who would not be astonished at so strange a constitution as that of Demophoön, steward to Alexander the Great, who sweated in the shade and shivered in the sun? I have seen those who have run from the smell of a mellow apple with greater precipitation than from a harquebus shot; others afraid of a mouse; others vomit at the sight of cream; others ready to swoon at the making of a feather bed; Germanicus could endure neither the sight nor the crowing of a cock. I will not deny but that there may, peradventure, be some occult cause and natural aversion in these cases; but, in my opinion, a man might conquer it, if he took it in time. Precept has in this wrought so effectually upon me, though not without some pains on my part, I confess, that beer excepted, my appetite accommodates itself indifferently to all sorts of diet.

These are my lessons, and he who puts them in practice shall reap more advantage than he who has had them read to

him only, and so only knows them. If you see him, you hear him; if you hear him, you see him. God forbid, says one in Plato, that to philosophize were only to read a great many books, and to learn the arts:—

“They have proceeded to this discipline of living well, which of all arts is the greatest, by their lives, rather than by their reading” (Cicero).

Leo, prince of Phlius, asking Heraclides Ponticus¹ of what art or science he made profession: “I know,” said he, “neither art nor science, but I am a philosopher.” One reproaching Diogenes that, being ignorant, he should pretend to philosophy: “I therefore,” answered he, “pretend to it with so much the more reason.” Hegesias entreated that he [Diogenes] would read a certain book to him: “You are pleasant,” said he; “you choose those figs that are true and natural, and not those that are painted; why do you not also choose exercises which are naturally true, rather than those written?”

The lad will not so much get his lesson by heart as he will practice it: he will repeat it in his actions. We shall discover if there be prudence in his exercises, if there be sincerity and justice in his deportment, if there be grace and judgment in his speaking; if there be constancy in his sickness; if there be modesty in his mirth, temperance in his pleasures, order in his domestic economy, indifference in his palate, whether what he eats or drinks be flesh or fish, wine or water:—

“Who considers his own discipline, not as a vain ostentation of science, but as a law and rule of life; and who obeys his own decrees, and the laws he has prescribed to himself” (Cicero).

The conduct of our lives is the true mirror of our doctrine.

¹ It was not Heraclides of Pontus who made this answer, but Pythagoras. [Hazlitt.]

In plain truth, the cares and expense our parents are at in our education point at nothing but to furnish our heads with knowledge; but not a word of judgment and virtue. Cry out, of one that passes by, to the people: "O, what a learned man!" and of another, "O, what a good man!" they will not fail to turn their eyes, and address their respect, to the former. There should then be a third crier, "O, the blockheads!" Men are apt presently to inquire, Does such a one understand Greek or Latin? Is he a poet? or does he write in prose? But whether he be grown better or more discreet, which are qualities of principal concern, these are never thought of. We should rather examine, who is better learned, than who is more learned.

We only labor to stuff the memory, and leave the conscience and the understanding unfurnished and void. Like birds who fly abroad to forage for grain, and bring it home in the beak, without tasting it themselves, to feed their young; so our pedants go picking knowledge here and there, out of books, and hold it at the tongue's end, only to spit it out and distribute it abroad. . . . We can say, Cicero says thus; these were the manners of Plato; these are the very words of Aristotle: but what do we say ourselves? What do we judge? A parrot would say as much as that.

We take other men's knowledge and opinions upon trust; which is an idle and superficial learning. We must make it our own. We are in this very like him who having need of fire went to a neighbor's house to fetch it, and finding a very good one there, sat down to warm himself without remembering to carry any with him home. What good does it do us to have the stomach full of meat, if it do not digest, if it be not incorporated with us, if it do not nourish and support us? Can we imagine that Lucullus, whom letters without any manner of experience made so great a captain, learned to be so

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after this perfunctory manner? We suffer ourselves to lean and rely so strongly upon the arm of another that we destroy our own strength and vigor. Would I fortify myself against the fear of death, it must be at the expense of Seneca: would I extract consolation for myself or my friend, I borrow it from Cicero. I might have found it in myself, had I been trained to make use of my own reason. I do not like this relative and mendicant understanding; for though we could become learned by other men's learning, a man can never be wise but by his own wisdom:—

“I hate the wise man who in his own concern is not wise” (Euripides).

Whence Ennius:—

“That wise man knows nothing who cannot profit himself by his wisdom” (Ennius).

“If he be grasping, or a boaster, and something softer than an Euganean lamb” (Juvenal).

“For wisdom is not only to be acquired, but to be utilized” (Cicero).

Dionysius¹ laughed at the grammarians who set themselves to inquire into the miseries of Ulysses, and were ignorant of their own; at musicians who were so exact in tuning their instruments, and never tuned their manners; at orators who made it a study to declare what is justice, but never took care to do it. If the mind be not better disposed, if the judgment be no better settled, I had much rather my scholar had spent his time at tennis, for, at least, his body would by that means be in better exercise and breath. Do but observe him when he comes back from school, after fifteen or sixteen years that he has been there; there is nothing so unfit for employment; all you shall find he has got, is, that his Latin and Greek have only made him a greater coxcomb than when he went from home. He should bring back his soul replete with good lit-

¹ It was not Dionysius, but Diogenes the cynic. [Hazlitt.]

erature, and he brings it only swelled and puffed up with vain and empty shreds and patches of learning; and has really nothing more in him than he had before.

Some of our Parliaments,¹ when they are to admit officers, examine only their learning; to which some of the others also add the trial of understanding, by asking their judgment of some case in law; of these the latter, methinks, proceed with the better method; for although both are necessary, and that it is very requisite they should be defective in neither, yet, in truth, knowledge is not so absolutely necessary as judgment; the last may make shift without the other, but the other never without this. For as the Greek verse says:—

“To what use serves learning, if understanding fail us?”

Would to God that, for the good of our judicature, these societies [that is, “our Parliaments”] were as well furnished with understanding and conscience as they are with knowledge.

“We do not study for life, but only for the school”
(Seneca).

We are not to tie learning to the soul, but to work and incorporate them together: not to tincture it only, but to give it a thorough and perfect dye; which, if it will not take color, and meliorate its imperfect state, it were without question better to let it alone. ’Tis a dangerous weapon, that will hinder and wound its master, if put into an awkward and unskillful hand:—

“So that it were better not to have learned”
(Cicero).

Aristo of Chios had reason to say that philosophers did their auditors harm, forasmuch as most of the souls of those that heard them were not capable of deriving benefit from in-

¹ Law courts.

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struction, which, if not applied to good, would certainly be applied to ill:—

“They proceeded effeminate debauchees from the school of Aristippus, cynics from that of Zeno” (Cicero).

In that excellent institution that Xenophon attributes to the Persians, we find that they taught their children virtue, as other nations do letters. Plato tells us that the eldest son in their royal succession was thus brought up: after his birth he was delivered, not to women, but to eunuchs of the greatest authority about their kings for their virtue, whose charge it was to keep his body healthful and in good plight; and after he came to seven years of age, to teach him to ride and to go a-hunting. When he arrived at fourteen he was transferred into the hands of four, the wisest, the most just, the most temperate, and most valiant of the nation; of whom the first was to instruct him in religion, the second to [teach him to] be always upright and sincere, the third to [teach him to] conquer his appetites and desires, and the fourth to [teach him to] despise all danger.

It is a thing worthy of very great consideration, that in that excellent, and, in truth, for its perfection, prodigious form of civil regimen set down by Lycurgus, though so solicitous of the education of children, as a thing of the greatest concern, and even in the very seat of the Muses, he should make so little mention of learning; as if that generous youth, disdaining all other subjection but that of virtue, ought to be supplied, instead of tutors to read to them arts and sciences, with such masters as should only instruct them in valor, prudence, and justice; an example that Plato has followed in his *Laws*. The manner of their discipline was to propound to them questions in judgment upon men and their actions; and if they commended or condemned this or that person or fact, they were to give a reason for so doing; by which means they

at once sharpened their understanding and learned what was right. Astyages, in Xenophon, asks Cyrus to give an account of his last lesson; and thus it was, "A great boy in our school, having a little short cassock, by force took a longer from another that was not so tall as he, and gave him his own in exchange: whereupon I, being appointed judge of the controversy, gave judgment that I thought it best each should keep the coat he had, for that they both of them were better fitted with that of one another than with their own: upon which my master told me I had done ill, in that I had only considered the fitness of the garments, whereas I ought to have considered the justice of the thing, which required that no one should have anything forcibly taken from him that is his own." And Cyrus adds that he was whipped for his pains, as we are in our villages for forgetting the first aorist of *tupto*.

My pedant [the unenlightened teacher of the day] must make me a very learned oration, *in genere demonstrativo*,¹ before he can persuade me that his school is like unto that. They knew how to go the readiest way to work; and seeing that science, when most rightly applied and best understood, can do no more but teach us prudence, moral honesty, and resolution, they thought fit, at first hand, to initiate their children with the knowledge of effects, and to instruct them, not by hearsay and rote but by the experiment of action, in lively forming and molding them; not only by words and precepts, but chiefly by works and examples; to the end it might not be a knowledge in the mind only, but its complexion and habit: not an acquisition, but a natural possession. One asking to this purpose Agesilaus what he thought most proper for boys to learn? "What they ought to do when they come to be men," said he. It is no wonder if such an institution produced so admirable effects.

¹ Of the demonstrative or argumentative type. (A technical term in rhetoric.)

Matthew Arnold

THE philosopher Epictetus, who had a school at Nicopolis in Epirus at the end of the first century of our era, thus apostrophizes a young gentleman whom he supposes to be applying to him for education:—

“Young sir, at home you have been at fisticuffs with the manservant, you have turned the house upside down, you have been a nuisance to the neighbors; and do you come here with the composed face of a sage, and mean to sit in judgment upon the lesson, and to criticize my want of point? You have come in here with envy and chagrin in your heart, humiliated at not getting your allowance paid you from home; and you sit with your mind full, in the intervals of the lecture, of how your father behaves to you, and how your brother. What are the people down at home saying about me?—They are thinking: Now he is getting on! they are saying: He will come home a walking dictionary!—Yes, and I should like to go home a walking dictionary; but then there is a deal of work required, and nobody sends me anything, and the bathing here at Nicopolis is dirty and nasty; things are all bad at home, and all bad here.”

Nobody can say that the bathing at Eton is dirty and nasty. But at Eton, as at Nicopolis, the moral disposition in which the pupil arrives at school, the thoughts and habits which he brings with him from home and from the social order in which he moves, must necessarily affect his power of profiting by what his schoolmasters have to teach him. This necessity is common to all schooling. You cannot escape from it here any more

¹ Address delivered to the Eton Literary Society. Published in 1879. Reprinted with the permission of Macmillan & Co., Ltd.

than they could at Nicopolis. Epictetus, however, was fully persuaded that what he had to teach was valuable, if the mental and moral frame of his pupils were but healthy enough to permit them to profit by it. I hope the Eton masters have the same conviction as to the native value of what they teach. But you know how many doubters and deniers of the value of a classical education we nowadays meet with. Let us put aside all that is said of the idleness, extravagance, and self-indulgence of the schoolboy. This may pair off with the complaint of Epictetus about the unsatisfactory moral state of his pupil. But with us there are many people who go on and say: "And when the schoolboy, in our public schools, does learn, he learns nothing that is worth knowing."

It is not of the Eton schoolboy only that this is said, but of the public schoolboy generally. We are all in the same boat,—all of us in whose schooling the Greek and Latin classics fill the principal place. And it avails nothing, that you try and appease the gainsayer by now acquainting yourselves with the diameter of the sun and moon, and with all sorts of matters which to us of an earlier and ruder generation were unknown. So long as the Greek and Latin classics continue to fill, as they do fill, the chief place in your school work, the gainsayer is implacable and sticks to his sentence, "When the boy does learn, he learns nothing that is worth knowing."

Amidst all this disparagement, one may well ask oneself anxiously what is really to be said on behalf of studies over which so much of our time is spent, and for which we have, many of us, contracted a fondness. And after much consideration I have arrived at certain conclusions, which for my own use I find sufficient, but which are of such extreme simplicity that one ought to hesitate, perhaps, before one produces them to other people. However, such as they are, I have been led to bring them out more than once, and I will very briefly

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rehearse them now. It seems to me, firstly, that what a man seeks through his education is to get to know himself and the world; next, that for this knowledge it is before all things necessary that he acquaint himself with the best which has been thought and said in the world; finally, that of this *best* the classics of Greece and Rome form a very chief portion, and the portion most entirely satisfactory. With these conclusions lodged safe in one's mind, one is stanch on the side of the humanities.

And in the same spirit of simplicity in which these conclusions have been reached, I proceed further. People complain that the significance of the classics which we read at school is not enough brought out, that the whole order and sense of that world from which they issue is not seized and held up to view. Well, but the best, in literature, has the quality of being in itself formative,—silently formative; of bringing out its own significance as we read it. It is better to read a masterpiece much, even if one does that only, than to read it a little, and to be told a great deal about its significance, and about the development and sense of the world from which it issues. Sometimes what one is told about the significance of a work, and about the development of a world, is extremely questionable. At any rate, a schoolboy, who, as they did in the times of ignorance at Eton, read his Homer and Horace through, and then read them through again, and so went on until he knew them by heart, is not, in my opinion, so very much to be pitied.

Still that sounding phrase, "the order and sense of a world," sends a kind of thrill through us when we hear it, especially when the world spoken of is a thing so great and so interesting as the Græco-Roman world of antiquity. If we are not deluded by it into thinking that to read fine talk about our classical documents is as good as to read the documents themselves, the phrase is one which we may with advantage lay

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to heart. I remember being struck, long ago, with a remark on the Greek poet Theognis by Goethe, who did not know Greek well and had to pick out its meaning by the help of a Latin translation, but who brought to everything which he read his powerful habits of thought and criticism. "When I first read Theognis," says Goethe, in substance, "I thought him querulous and morbid, and disliked him. But when I came to know how entirely his poetry proceeded from the real circumstances of his life, from the situation of parties in Megara, his native city, and from the effects of that situation upon himself and his friends, then I read him with quite another feeling." How very little do any of us treat the poetry of Theognis and other ancients in that fashion! was my thought after reading Goethe's criticism. And earlier still I remember being struck at hearing a schoolfellow, who had left the sixth form at Rugby for Cambridge, and who had fallen in somewhere with one of Bunsen's sons, who is now a member of the German Parliament,—at hearing this schoolfellow contrast the training of George Bunsen, as we then called him, with our own. Perhaps you think that at Rugby, which is often spoken of, though quite erroneously, as a sort of opposition establishment to Eton, we treated the classics in a high philosophical way, and traced the sequence of things in ancient literature, when you at Eton professed nothing of the kind. But hear the criticism of my old schoolfellow. "It is wonderful," said he; "not only can George Bunsen construe his Herodotus, but he has a view of the place of Herodotus in literary history, a thing none of us ever thought about." My friend spoke the truth; but even then, as I listened to him, I felt an emotion at hearing of the place of Herodotus in literary history. Yes, not only to be able to read the admirable works of classical literature, but to conceive also that Græco-Roman world, which is so mighty a factor in our own world, our own life, to conceive it as a whole of which we can trace

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the sequence, and the sense, and the connection with ourselves, this does undoubtedly also belong to a classical education, rightly understood.

But even here, too, a plain person can proceed, if he likes, with great simplicity. As Goethe says of life: Strike into it anywhere, lay hold of it anywhere, it is always powerful and interesting,—so one may almost say of classical literature. Strike into it where you like, lay hold of it where you like, you can nearly always find a thread which will lead you, if you follow it, to large and instructive results. Let us to-night follow a single Greek word in this fashion, and try to compensate ourselves, however imperfectly, for having to divert our thoughts, just for one evening's lecture, from the diameter of the sun and moon.

The word I will take is the word *eutrapelos*, *eutrapelia*. Let us consider it first as it occurs in the famous Funeral Oration put by Thucydides into the mouth of Pericles. The word stands there for one of the chief of those qualities which have made Athens, says Pericles, "the school of Greece"; for a quality by which Athens is eminently representative of what is called Hellenism: the quality of flexibility. "A happy and gracious flexibility," Pericles calls this quality of the Athenians; and it is no doubt a charming gift.¹ Lucidity of thought, clearness and propriety of language, freedom from prejudice and freedom from stiffness, openness of mind, amiability of manners,—all these seem to go along with a certain happy flexibility of nature, and to depend upon it. Nor does this suppleness and flexibility of nature at all necessarily imply, as we English are apt to suppose, a relaxed moral fiber and weakness. In the Athenian of the best time it did not. "In the Athenians," says Professor Curtius, "the sense of energy abhorred every kind of waste of time, their sense of measure

¹ For a complete translation of the speech in question, see below, p. 415.

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abhorred bombast and redundancy, and their clear intelligence everything partaking of obscurity or vagueness; it was their habit in all things to advance directly and resolutely to the goal. Their dialect is characterized by a superior seriousness, manliness, and vigor of language."

There is no sign of relaxation of moral fiber here; and yet, at the same time, the Athenians were eminent for a happy and gracious flexibility. That quality, as we all know, is not a characteristic quality of the Germanic nations, to which we ourselves belong. Men are educable, and when we read of the abhorrence of the Attic mind for redundancy and obscurity of expression, its love for direct and telling speech, and then think of modern German, we may say with satisfaction that the circumstances of our life have at any rate educated us into the use of straightforward and vigorous forms of language. But they have not educated us into flexibility. All around us we may observe proofs of it. The state of Ireland is a proof of it. We are rivals with Russia in Central Asia, and at this moment it is particularly interesting to note how the want of just this one Athenian quality of flexibility seems to tell against us in our Asiatic rivalry with Russia. "Russia," observes one who is perhaps the first of living geographers,—an Austrian, Herr von Hellwald,—“possesses far more shrewdness, *flexibility*, and congeniality than England; qualities adapted to make the Asiatic more tractable.” And again: “There can be no dispute which of the two, England or Russia, is the more civilized nation. But it is just as certain that the highly civilized English understand but indifferently how to raise their Asiatic subjects to their own standard of civilization; whilst the Russians attain, with their much lower standard of civilization, far greater results amongst the Asiatic tribes, whom they know how to assimilate in the most remarkable manner. Of course they can only bring them to the same level which they have reached themselves; but the little which

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they can and do communicate to them counts actually for much more than the great boons which the English do not know how to impart. Under the auspices of Russia the advance in civilization amongst the Asiatics is indeed slow and inconsiderable, but steady, and suitable to their natural capacities and the disposition of their race. On the other hand, they remain indifferent to British civilization, which is absolutely incomprehensible to them."

Our word "flexibility" has here carried us a long way, carried us to Turkestan and the valleys of the Jaxartes and Oxus. Let us get back to Greece, at any rate. The generation of Pericles is succeeded by the generation of Plato and Aristotle. Still the charming and Athenian quality of *eutrapelia* continues to be held in high esteem. Only the word comes to stand more particularly for flexibility and felicity in the give-and-take of gay and light social intercourse. With Aristotle it is one of the virtues: the virtue of him who in this pleasant sort of intercourse, so relished by the Greeks, manages exactly to hit the happy and right mean; the virtue opposed to buffoonery on the one side, and to morose rusticity, or clownishness, on the other. It is in especial the virtue of the young, and is akin to the grace and charm of youth. When old men try to adapt themselves to the young, says Plato, they betake themselves, in imitation of the young, to *eutrapelia* and pleasantry.

Four hundred years pass, and we come to the date of the Epistle to the Ephesians. The word *eutrapelia* rises in the mind of the writer of that Epistle. It rises to St. Paul's mind, and he utters it; but in how different a sense from the praising and admiring sense in which we have seen the word used by Thucydides and Aristotle! *Eutrapelia*, which once stood for that eminently Athenian and Hellenic virtue of happy and gracious flexibility, now conveys this favorable sense no longer, but is ranked, with filthiness and foolish talking, among things

which are not convenient. Like these, it is not to be even so much as once named among the followers of God: "neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting (*eutrapelia*), which are not convenient."

This is an extraordinary change, you will say. But now, as we have descended four hundred years from Aristotle to St. Paul, let us ascend, not four hundred, not quite even one hundred years, from Thucydides to Pindar. The religious Theban poet, we shall see (and the thing is surely very remarkable), speaks of the quality of *eutrapelia* in the same disapproving and austere way as the writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians. The young and noble Jason appears at Iolcos, and being questioned about himself by Pelias, he answers that he has been trained in the nurture and admonition of the old and just Centaur, Chiron. "From his cave I come, from Chariclo and Philyra, his stainless daughters, who there nursed me. Lo, these twenty years am I with them, and there hath been found in me neither deed nor word that is not convenient; and now, behold, I am come home, that I may recover my father's kingdom." The adjective *eutrapelos*, as it is here used in connection with its two nouns, means exactly a word or deed, in Biblical phrase, of *vain lightness*, a word or deed *such as is not convenient*.

There you have the history of the varying use of the words *eutrapelos*, *eutrapelia*. And now see how this varying use gives us a clue to the order and sense, as we say, of all that Greek world so nearly and wonderfully connected with us, so profoundly interesting for us, so full of precious lessons.

We must begin with generalities, but we will try not to lose ourselves in them, and not to remain amongst them long. Human life and human society arise, we know, out of the presence in man of certain needs, certain instincts, and out of the constant endeavor of these instincts to satisfy and develop themselves. We may briefly sum them up, these needs or

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instincts, as being, first and foremost, a general instinct of expansion; then, as being instincts following diverse great lines, which may be conveniently designated as the lines of conduct, of intellect and knowledge, of beauty, of social life and manners. Some lines are more in view and more in honor at one time, some at another. Some men and some nations are more eminent on one line, some on another. But the final aim, of making our own and of harmoniously combining the powers to be reached on each and all of these great lines, is the ideal of human life. And our race is forever recalled to this aim, and held fast to it, by the instinct of self-preservation in humanity.

The ideal of human life being such as it is, all these great and diverse powers, to the attainment of which our instincts, as we have seen, impel us, hang together,—cannot be truly possessed and employed in isolation. Yet it is convenient, owing to the way in which we find them actually exhibiting themselves in human life and in history, to treat them separately, and to make distinctions of rank amongst them. In this view, we may say that the power of conduct is the greatest of all the powers now named; that it is even three-fourths of life. And wherever much is founded amongst men, there the power of conduct has surely been present and at work, although of course there may be and are, along with it, other powers too.

Now, then, let us look at the beginnings of that Greece to which we owe so much, and which we may almost, so far as our intellectual life is concerned, call the mother of us all. "So well has she done her part," as the Athenian Isocrates truly says of her, "that the name of Greeks seems no longer to stand for a race but to stand for intelligence itself; and they who share in Hellenic culture are called Greeks even before those who are merely of Hellenic blood."

The beginnings of this wonderful Greece, what are they?

Greek history begins for us with the sanctuaries of Tempe

and Delphi, and with the Apolline worship and priesthood which in those sanctuaries under Olympus and Parnassus established themselves. The northern sanctuary of Tempe soon yielded to Delphi as the center of national Hellenic life and of Apolline religion. We are accustomed to think of Apollo as the awakener and nourisher of what is called genius, and so from the very first the Greeks, too, considered him. But in those earliest days of Hellas, and at Delphi, where the hardy and serious tribes of the Dorian Highlands made their influence felt, Apollo was not only the nourisher of genius, he was also the author of every higher moral effort. He was the prophet of his father Zeus, in the highest view of Zeus, as the source of the ideas of moral order and of right. For to this higher significance had the names of Zeus and Phœbus,—names originally derived from sun and air,—gradually risen. They had come to designate a Father, the source of the ideas of moral order and of right; and a Son, his prophet, purifying and inspiring the soul with these ideas, and also with the idea of intellectual beauty.

Now, the ideas of moral order and of right which are in human nature, and which are, indeed, a main part of human life, were especially, we are told, a treasure possessed by the less gay and more solitary tribes in the mountains of northern Greece. These Dorian tribes were Delphi's first pupils. And the graver view of life, the thoughts which give depth and solemnity to man's consciousness, the moral ideas, in short, of conduct and righteousness, were the governing elements in the manner of spirit propagated from Delphi. The words written upon the temple at Delphi called all comers to *sobriety and righteousness*. The Doric and Æolic Pindar felt profoundly this severe influence of Delphi. It is not to be considered as an influence at war with the idea of intellectual beauty;—to mention the name of Pindar is in itself sufficient to show how little this was, or could be, the case. But it was,

above all, an influence charged with the ideas of moral order and of right.

And there were confronting these Dorian founders of Hellas, and well known to them, and connected with them in manifold ways, other Greeks of a very different spiritual type; the Asiatic Greeks of Ionia, full of brilliancy and mobility, but over whom the ideas of moral order and of right had too little power, and who could never succeed in founding among themselves a serious and powerful state. It was evident that the great source of the incapacity which accompanied, in these Ionians of Asia, so much brilliancy, that the great enemy in them to the *Halt*, as Goethe calls it, the steadiness, which moral natures so highly prize, was their extreme mobility of spirit, their gay lightness, their *eutrapelia*. For Pindar, therefore, the word *eutrapelos*, expressing easy flexibility and mobility, becomes a word of stern opprobrium, and conveys the reproach of vain folly.

The Athenians were Ionians. But they were Ionians transplanted to Hellas, and who had breathed, as a Hellenic nation, the air of Delphi, that bracing atmosphere of the ideas of moral order and of right. In this atmosphere the Athenians, Ionian as they were, imbibed influences of character and steadiness, which for a long while balanced their native vivacity and mobility, distinguished them profoundly from the Ionians of Asia, and gave them men like Aristides.

Still, the Athenians were Ionians. They had the Ionian quickness and flexibility, the Ionian turn for gayety, wit, and fearless thinking, the Ionian impatience of restraint. This nature of theirs asserted itself, first of all, as an impatience of *false* restraint. It asserted itself in opposition to the real faults of the Dorian spirit,—faults which became more and more manifest as time went on,—to the unprogressiveness of this spirit, to its stiffness, hardness, narrowness, prejudice, want of insight, want of amiability. And in real truth, by the

time of Pericles, Delphi, the great creation of the Dorian spirit, had broken down, and was a witness to that spirit's lack of a real power of life and growth. Bribes had discredited the sanctity of Delphi; a seriousness and vital power had left it. It had come to be little more than a name, and what continued to exist there was merely a number of forms.

Now then was the turn of the Athenians. With the idea of conduct, so little grasped by the Ionians of Asia, still deeply impressed on their soul, they freely and joyfully called forth also that pleasure in life, that love of clear thinking and of fearless discussion, that gay social temper, that ease and lightness, that gracious flexibility, which were in their nature. These were their gifts, and they did well to bring them forth. The gifts are in themselves gifts of great price, like those other gifts contributed by the primitive and serious Dorian tribes, their rivals. Man has to advance, we have seen, along several lines, and he does well to advance along them. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

And at this moment Thucydides, a man in whom the old virtue and the new reason were in just balance, has put into the mouth of Pericles, another man of the same kind, an encomium on the modern spirit, as we may call it, of which Athens was the representative. By the mouth of Pericles, Thucydides condemned old-fashioned narrowness and illiberality. He applauded enjoyment of life. He applauded freedom from restraint. He applauded clear and fearless thinking,—the resolute bringing of our actions to the rule of reason. His expressions on this point greatly remind me of the fine saying of one of your own worthies, "the ever-memorable Mr. John Hales, of Eton College." "I comprise it all," says Hales, "in two words: *what* and *wherefore*. That part of your burden which contains *what*, you willingly take

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up. But that other, which comprehends *why*—that is either too hot or too heavy; you dare not meddle with it. But I must add that also to your burden, or else I must leave you for idle persons; for without the knowledge of *why*, of the grounds or reasons of things, there is no possibility of not being deceived." It seems to me not improbable that Hales had here in his mind the very words of the Funeral Oration: "We do not esteem discussion a hurt to action; what we consider mischievous is rather the setting oneself to work without first getting the guidance of reason." Finally, Thucydides applauded the quality of nature which above all others made the Athenians the men for the new era, and he used the word *eutrapelos* in its proper and natural sense, to denote the quality of happy and gracious flexibility.

Somewhat narrowed, so as to mean especially flexibility and adroitness in light social intercourse, but still employed in its natural and favorable sense, the word descends, as we saw, to Plato and Aristotle. Isocrates speaks of the quality as one which the old school regarded with alarm and disapproval; but, nevertheless, for him too the word has evidently, in itself, just the same natural and favorable sense which it has for Aristotle and Plato.

I quoted, just now, some words from the Book of Ecclesiastes, one of the wisest and one of the worst understood books in the Bible. Let us hear how the writer goes on after the words which I quoted. He proceeds thus: "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun; yea, if a man live many years, let him rejoice in them all; and let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. All that is future is vanity. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes;—but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Let us apply

these admirable words to the life and work of the Athenian people.

The old rigid order, in Greece, breaks down; a new power appears on the scene. It is the Athenian genius, with its freedom from restraint, its flexibility, its bold reason, its keen enjoyment of life. Well, let it try what it can do. Up to a certain point it is clearly in the right; possibly it may be in the right altogether. Let it have free play, and show what it can do. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." Whether the old line is good, or the new line, or whether they are both of them good, and must both of them be used, cannot be known without trying. Let the Athenians try, therefore, and let their genius have full swing. "Rejoice; walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes;—*but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*" In other words: Your enjoyment of life, your freedom from restraint, your clear and bold reason, your flexibility, are natural and excellent; but on condition that you know how to live with them, that you make a real success of them.

And a man like Pericles or Phidias seemed to afford promise that Athens would know how to make a real success of her qualities, and that an alliance between the old morality and the new freedom might be, through the admirable Athenian genius, happily established. And with such promise before his eyes, a serious man like Thucydides might well give, to the new freedom, the high and warm praise which we see given to it in the Funeral Oration.

But it soon became evident that the balance between the old morality and the new freedom was not to be maintained, and that the Athenians had the defects, as the saying is, of their qualities. Their minds were full of other things than those

ideas of moral order and of right on which primitive Hellas had formed itself, and of which they themselves had, as worshipers in the shadow of the Parnassian sanctuary, once deeply felt the power. These ideas lost their predominance. The predominance for Athens,—and, indeed, for Hellas at large,—of a national religion of righteousness, of grave ideas of conduct and moral order, predominating over all other ideas, disappeared with the decline of Delphi, never to return. Not only did these ideas lose exclusive predominance, they lost all due weight. Still, indeed, they inspired poetry; and then, after inspiring the great Attic poets, Æschylus and Sophocles, they inspired the great Attic philosophers, Socrates and Plato. But the Attic nation, which henceforth stood, in fact, for the Hellenic people, could not manage to keep its mind bent sufficiently upon them. The Attic nation had its mind bent on other things. It threw itself ardently upon other lines, which man, indeed, has to follow, which at one time, in Greece, had not been enough followed, of which Athens strongly felt the attraction, and on which it had rare gifts for excelling. The Attic nation gave its heart to those powers which we have designated, for the sake of brevity and convenience, as those of expansion, intellect, beauty, social life and manners. Athens and Greece allowed themselves to be diverted and distracted from attention to conduct, and to the ideas which inspire conduct.

It was not that the old religious beliefs of Greece, to which the ideas that inspire conduct had attached themselves, did not require to be transformed by the new spirit. They did. The greatest and best Hellenic souls, Anaxagoras, Pericles, Phidias, Sophocles, Socrates, Plato, felt, and rightly felt, that they did. The judicious historian of Greece, whom I have already quoted, Professor Curtius, says expressly: "The popular faith was everywhere shaken, and a life resting simply on the traditional notions was no longer possible. A dangerous rupture

was at hand, unless the ancient faith were purged and elevated in such a manner as to meet the wants of the age. Mediators in this sense appeared in the persons of the great poets of Athens." Yes, they appeared; but the current was setting too strongly another way. Poetry itself, after the death of Sophocles, "was seized," says Professor Curtius, "by the same current which dissolved the foundations of the people's life, and which swept away the soil wherein the emotions of the classical period had been rooted. The old perished; but the modern age, with all its readiness in thought and speech, was incapable of creating a new art as a support to its children."

Socrates was so penetrated with the new intellectual spirit that he was called a sophist. But the great effort of Socrates was to recover that firm foundation for human life, which a misuse of the new intellectual spirit was rendering impossible. He effected much more for after times, and for the world, than for his own people. His amount of success with Alcibiades may probably be taken as giving us, well enough, the measure of his success with the Athenian people at large. "As to the susceptibility of Alcibiades," we are told, "Socrates had not come too late, for he still found in him a youthful soul, susceptible of high inspirations. But to effect in him a permanent reaction, and a lasting and fixed change of mind, was beyond the power even of a Socrates." Alcibiades oscillated and fell away; and the Athenian people, too, and Hellas as a whole, oscillated and fell away.

So it came to pass, that after Æschylus had sadly raised his voice to deprecate "unblessed freedom from restraint," and after complaints had been heard, again and again, of the loss of "the ancient morality and piety," of "the old elements of Hellas, reflection and moderation, discipline and social morality," it came to pass that finally, at the end of the Peloponnesian war, "one result," the historian tells us—"one result

alone admitted of no doubt; and that was, the horribly rapid progress of the demoralization of the Hellenic nation."

Years and centuries rolled on, and, first, the Hellenic genius issued forth invading and vanquishing with Alexander; and then, when Rome had afterwards conquered Greece, conquered the conquerors and overspread the civilized world. And still, joined to all the gifts and graces which that admirable genius brought with it, there went, as a kind of fatal accompaniment, moral inadequacy. And if one asked why this was so, it seemed as if it could only be because the power of seriousness, of tenacious grasp upon grave and moral ideas, was wanting. And this again seemed as if it could only have for its cause, that these Hellenic natures were, in respect of their impressionability, mobility, flexibility, under the spell of a graceful but dangerous fairy, who would not let it be otherwise. "Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life," says the Wise Man, "*her ways are movable, that thou canst not know them.*" Then the new and reforming spirit, the Christian spirit, which was rising in the world, turned sternly upon this gracious flexibility, changed the sense of its name, branded it with infamy, and classed it, along with "filthiness and foolish talking," among "things which are not convenient."

Now, there you see the historical course of our words *eutrapelos*, *eutrapelia*, and a specimen of the range, backwards and forwards, which a single phrase in one of our Greek or Latin classics may have.

And I might go yet further, and might show you, in the mediæval world, *eutrapelia*, or flexibility, quite banished, clear, straightforward Attic thinking quite lost; restraint, stoppage, and prejudice, regnant. And coming down to our own times, I might show you fearless thinking and flexibility once more, after many vicissitudes, coming into honor; and again, perhaps, not without their accompaniment of danger. And the moral from all this,—apart from the particular moral that in our

classical studies we may everywhere find clues which will lead us a long way,—the moral is, not that flexibility is a bad thing, but that the Greek flexibility was really not flexible enough, because it could not enough bend itself to the moral ideas which are so large a part of life. Here, I say, is the true moral: that man has to make progress along diverse lines, in obedience to a diversity of aspirations and powers, the sum of which is truly his nature; and that he fails and falls short until he learns to advance upon them all, and to advance upon them harmoniously.

Yes, this is the moral, and we all need it, and no nation more than ours. We so easily think that life is all on one line! Our nation, for instance, is above all things a political nation, and is apt to make far too much of politics. Many of us,—though not so very many, I suppose, of you here,¹—are Liberals, and think that to be a Liberal is quite enough for a man. Probably most of you here will have no difficulty in believing that to be a Liberal is not alone enough for a man, is not saving. One might even take,—and with your notions it would probably be a great treat for you,—one might take the last century of Athens, the century preceding the “dishonest victory” of the Macedonian power, and show you a society dying of the triumph of the Liberal party. And then, again, as the young are generous, you might like to give the discomfited Liberals a respite, to let the other side have its turn; and you might consent to be shown, as you could be shown in the age of Trajan and of the Antonines, a society dying of the triumph of the Conservative party. They were excellent people, the Conservative Roman aristocracy of that epoch;—excellent, most respectable people, like the Conservatives of our own acquaintance. Only Conservatism, like Liberalism, taken alone, is not sufficient, is not of itself saving.

¹ The boys at Eton coming mostly from aristocratic and conservative families.

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But you have had enough for one evening. And besides, the tendencies of the present day in education being what they are, before you proceed to hear more of this sort of thing, you ought certainly to be favored, for several months to come, with a great many scientific lectures, and to busy yourselves considerably with the diameter of the sun and moon.

down - V. 1, cap. 2

Thomas Carlyle

I

POET and Prophet differ greatly in our loose modern notions of them. In some old languages, again, the titles are synonymous; *Vates* means both Prophet and Poet: and indeed at all times, Prophet and Poet, well understood, have much kindred of meaning. Fundamentally indeed they are still the same; in this most important respect especially, That they have penetrated both of them into the sacred mystery of the Universe; what Goethe calls "the open secret." "Which is the great secret?" asks one.—"The *open* secret,"—open to all, seen by almost none! That divine mystery, which lies everywhere in all Beings, "the Divine Idea of the World, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance," as Fichte styles it; of which all Appearance, from the starry sky to the grass of the field, but especially the Appearance of Man and his work, is but the *vesture*, the embodiment that renders it visible. This divine mystery *is* in all times and in all places; veritably is. In most times and places it is greatly overlooked; and the Universe, definable always in one or the other dialect, as the realized Thought of God, is considered a trivial, inert, commonplace matter,—as if, says the Satirist, it were a dead thing, which some upholsterer had put together! It could do no good, at present, to *speak* much about this; but it is a pity for every one of us if we do not know it, live ever in the knowl-

¹Under this title are here assembled related passages from three of Carlyle's works. Parts I and II are from the lectures *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History*; Part III is from *The Diamond Necklace*; and Part IV is from *Sartor Resartus*.

edge of it. Really a most mournful pity;—a failure to live at all, if we live otherwise!

II

You remember that fancy of Plato's, of a man who had grown to maturity in some dark distance, and was brought on a sudden into the upper air to see the sun rise. What would his wonder be, his rapt astonishment at the sight we daily witness with indifference! ¹ With the free open sense of a child, yet with the ripe faculty of a man, his whole heart would be kindled by that sight, he would discern it well to be Godlike, his soul would fall down in worship before it. Now, just such a childlike greatness was in the primitive nations. The first Pagan Thinker among rude men, the first man that began to think, was precisely this child-man of Plato's. Simple, open as a child, yet with the depth and strength of a man. Nature had as yet no name to him; he had not yet united under a name the infinite variety of sights, sounds, shapes, and motions, which we now collectively name Universe, Nature, or the like,—and so with a name dismiss it from us. To the wild deep-hearted man all was yet new, not veiled under names or formulas; it stood naked, flashing-in on him there, beautiful, awful, unspeakable. Nature was to this man, what to the Thinker and Prophet it forever is, *preternatural*. This green flowery rock-built earth, the trees, the mountains, rivers, many-sounding seas;—that great deep sea of azure that swims overhead; the winds sweeping through it; the black cloud fashioning itself together, now pouring out fire, now hail and rain; what *is* it? Ay, what? At bottom we do not yet know; we can never know at all. It is not by our superior insight that we escape the difficulty; it is by our superior levity, our inattention, our *want* of insight. It is by

¹ Compare Emerson, below, pp. 389f.

not thinking that we cease to wonder at it. Hardened round us, incasing wholly every notion we form, is a wrappage of traditions, hearsays, mere *words*. We call that fire of the black thundercloud "electricity," and lecture learnedly about it, and grind the like of it out of glass and silk; but *what* is it? What made it? Whence comes it? Whither goes it? Science has done much for us; but it is a poor science that would hide from us the great deep sacred infinitude of Nescience, whither we can never penetrate, on which all science swims as a mere superficial film. This world, after all our science and sciences, is still a miracle; wonderful, inscrutable, *magical* and more, to whosoever will *think* of it.

That great mystery of TIME, were there no other; the illimitable, silent, never-resting thing called Time, rolling, rushing on, swift, silent, like an all-embracing ocean-tide, on which we and all the Universe swim like exhalations, like apparitions which *are*, and then *are not*: this is forever very literally a miracle; a thing to strike us dumb,—for we have no word to speak about it. This Universe, ah me—what could the wild man know of it; what can we yet know? That it is a Force, and thousandfold Complexity of Forces; a Force which is *not we*. That is all; it is not we, it is altogether different from *us*. Force, Force, everywhere Force; we ourselves a mysterious Force in the center of that. "There is not a leaf rotting on the highway but has Force in it: how else could it rot?" Nay surely, to the Atheistic Thinker, if such a one were possible, it must be a miracle too, this huge, illimitable whirlwind of Force, which envelops us here; never-resting whirlwind, high as Immensity, old as Eternity. What is it? God's creation, the religious people answer; it is the Almighty God's! Atheistic science babbles poorly of it, with scientific nomenclatures, experiments and what-not, as if it were a poor dead thing, to be bottled-up in Leyden jars and sold over counters: but the natural sense of man, in all times,

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if he will honestly apply his sense, proclaims it to be a living thing,—ah, an unspeakable Godlike thing; towards which the best attitude for us, after never so much science, is awe, devout prostration and humility of soul; worship if not in words, then in silence.

But now I remark farther: What in such a time as ours it requires a Prophet or Poet to teach us, namely, the stripping-off of those poor undevout wrappings, nomenclatures and scientific hearsays,—this, the ancient earnest soul, as yet unencumbered with these things, did for itself. The world, which is now divine only to the gifted, was then divine to whosoever would turn his eye upon it. He stood bare before it face to face. "All was Godlike or God:"—Jean Paul still finds it so; the giant Jean Paul, who has power to escape out of hearsays: but there then were no hearsays. Canopus shining-down over the desert, with its blue diamond brightness (that wild blue spirit-like brightness, far brighter than we ever witness here), would pierce into the heart of the wild Ishmaelitish man, whom it was guiding through the solitary waste there. To his wild heart, with all feelings in it, with no *speech* for any feeling, it might seem a little eye, that Canopus, glancing-out on him from the great deep Eternity; revealing the inner Splendor to him. Cannot we understand how these men *worshipped* Canopus; became what we call Sabeans, worshiping the stars? Such is to me the secret of all forms of Paganism. Worship is transcendent wonder; wonder for which there is now no limit or measure; that is worship. To these primeval men, all things and everything they saw exist beside them were an emblem of the Godlike, of some God.

And look what perennial fiber of truth was in that. To us, also, through every star, through every blade of grass, is not a God made visible, if we will open our minds and eyes? We do not worship in that way now: but is it not reckoned still a merit, proof of what we call a "poetic nature," that we rec-

ognize how every object has a divine beauty in it; how every object still verily is "a window through which we may look into Infinitude itself"? He that can discern the loveliness of things, we call him Poet, Painter, Man of Genius, gifted, lovable. These poor Sabceans did even what he does,—in their own fashion. That they did it, in what fashion soever, was a merit: better than what the entirely stupid man did, what the horse and camel did,—namely, nothing!

But now if all things whatsoever that we look upon are emblems to us of the Highest God, I add that more so than any of them is man such an emblem. You have heard of St. Chrysostom's celebrated saying in reference to the Shekinah, or Ark of Testimony, visible Revelation of God, among the Hebrews: "The true Shekinah is Man!" Yes, it is even so: this is no vain phrase; it is veritably so. The essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself "I,"—ah, what words have we for such things?—is a breath of Heaven; the Highest Being reveals itself in man. This body, these faculties, this life of ours, is it not all as a vesture for that Unnamed? "There is but one Temple in the Universe," says the devout Novalis, "and that is the Body of Man. Nothing is holier than that high form. Bending before men is a reverence done to this Revelation in the Flesh. We touch Heaven when we lay our hand on a human body!" This sounds much like a mere flourish of rhetoric; but it is not so. If well meditated, it will turn out to be a scientific fact; the expression, in such words as can be had, of the actual truth of the thing. *We* are the miracle of miracles,—the great inscrutable mystery of God. We cannot understand it, we know not how to speak of it; but we may feel and know, if we like, that it is verily so.

III

In our own poor Nineteenth Century the Writer of these lines has been fortunate enough to see not a few glimpses

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of Romance; he imagines this Nineteenth is hardly a whit less romantic than that Ninth, or any other, since centuries began. Apart from Napoleon, and the Dantons and Mirabeaus, whose fire-words of public speaking, and fire-whirlwinds of cannon and musketry, which for a season darkened the air, are perhaps at bottom but superficial phenomena, he has witnessed, in remotest places, much that could be called romantic, even miraculous. He has witnessed overhead the infinite Deep, the greater and lesser lights, bright-rolling, silent-beaming, hurled forth by the Hand of God: around him and under his feet, the wonderfulest Earth, with her winter snowstorms and her summer spice-airs; and, unaccountablest of all, *himself* standing there. He stood in the lapse of Time; he saw Eternity behind him, and before him. The all-encircling mysterious tide of FORCE, thousandfold (for from force of Thought to force of Gravitation what an interval!), billowed shoreless on; bore him too along with it,—he too was part of it. From its bosom rose and vanished, in perpetual change, the lordliest Real-Phantasmagory, which men name *Being*; and ever anew rose and vanished; and ever that lordliest many-colored scene was full, another yet the same. Oak-trees fell, young acorns sprang: Men too, new-sent from the Unknown, he met, of tiniest size, who waxed into stature, into strength of sinew, passionate fire, and light: in other men the light was growing dim, the sinews all feeble; they sank, motionless, into ashes, into invisibility; returned *back* to the Unknown, beckoning him their mute farewell. He wanders still by the parting-spot; cannot hear *them*; they are far, how far!—

It was a sight for angels, and archangels; for, indeed, God himself had made it wholly. One many-glancing asbestos-thread in the Web of Universal-History, spirit-woven, it rustled there, as with the howl of mighty winds, through that “wild-roaring Loom of Time.” Generation after generation, hundreds of them or thousands of them, from the unknown

Beginning, so loud, so stormful-busy, rushed torrent-wise, thundering down, down; and fell all silent,—nothing but some feeble re-echo, which grew ever feebler, struggling up; and Oblivion swallowed them *all*. Thousands more, to the unknown Ending, will follow: and *thou* here, of this present one, hangest as a drop, still sun-gilt, on the giddy edge; one moment, while the Darkness has not yet engulfed thee. O Brother! is *that* what thou callest prosaic; of small interest? Of small interest and for *thee*? Awake, poor troubled sleeper: shake off thy torpid nightmare-dream; look, see, behold it, the Flame-image; splendors high as Heaven, terrors deep as Hell: this is God's Creation; this is Man's Life!—Such things has the Writer of these lines witnessed, in this poor Nineteenth Century of ours; and what are all such to the things he yet hopes to witness? Hopes, with truest assurance. "I have painted so much," said the good Jean Paul, in his old days, "and I have never seen the Ocean:—the Ocean of Eternity I shall not fail to see!"

Such being the intrinsic quality of this Time, and of all Time whatsoever, might not the Poet who chanced to walk through it find objects enough to paint? What object soever he fixed on, were it the meanest of the mean, let him but paint it in its actual truth, as it swims there, in such environment; world-old, yet new and never-ending; an indestructible portion of the miraculous All,—his picture of it were a Poem. How much more if the object fixed on were not mean, but one already wonderful; the mystic "actual truth" of which, if it lay not on the surface, yet shone through the surface, and invited even Prosaists to search for it!

The present Writer, who unhappily belongs to that class, has nevertheless a firmer and firmer persuasion of two things: first, as was seen, that Romance exists: secondly, that now, and formerly, and evermore it exists, strictly speaking, in Reality alone. The thing that *is*, what can be *so* wonderful; what,

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especially to us that *are*, can have such significance? Study Reality, he is ever and anon saying to himself; search out deeper and deeper *its* quite endless mystery: see it, know it; then, whether thou wouldst learn from it, and again teach; or weep over it, or laugh over it, or love it, or despise it, or in any way relate thyself to it, thou hast the firmest enduring basis: *that* hieroglyphic page is one thou canst read on forever, find new meaning in forever.

IV

Sweep away the Illusion of Time; glance, if thou have eyes, from the near moving-cause to its far distant Mover: The stroke that came transmitted through a whole galaxy of elastic balls, was it less a stroke than if the last ball only had been struck, and sent flying? Oh, could I (with the Time-annihilating Hat) transport thee direct from the Beginnings to the Endings, how were thy eyesight unsealed, and thy heart set flaming in the Light-sea of celestial wonder! Then sawest thou that this fair Universe, were it in the meanest province thereof, is in very deed the star-domed City of God; that through every star, through every grass-blade, and most through every Living Soul, the glory of a present God still beams. But Nature, which is the Time-vesture of God, and reveals Him to the wise, hides Him from the foolish.

Again, could anything be more miraculous than an actual authentic Ghost? The English Johnson longed, all his life, to see one; but could not, though he went to Cock Lane, and thence to the church-vaults, and tapped on coffins.¹ Foolish Doctor! Did he never, with the mind's eye as well as with the body's, look round him into that full tide of human Life he so loved; did he never so much as look into Himself? The good Doctor was a Ghost, as actual and authentic as heart could

¹ An account of the matter is given by Boswell in his *Life* of Johnson.

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wish; well-nigh a million of Ghosts were traveling the streets by his side. Once more I say, sweep away the illusion of Time; compress the threescore years into three minutes: what else was he, what else are we? (Are we not Spirits, that are shaped into a body, into an Appearance; and that fade away again into air and Invisibility? This is no metaphor, it is a simple scientific *fact*: we start out of Nothingness, take figure, and are Apparitions; round us, as round the veriest specter, is Eternity; and to Eternity minutes are as years and æons. Come there not tones of Love and Faith, as from celestial harp-strings, like the Song of beatified Souls? And again, do not we squeak and gibber (in our discordant, screech-owlish debatings and recriminatings); and glide bodeful, and feeble, and fearful; or uproar and revel in our mad Dance of the Dead,—till the scent of the morning air summons us to our still Home; and dreamy Night becomes awake and Day? Where now is Alexander of Macedon: does the steel Host, that yelled in fierce battle-shouts at Issus and Arbela, remain behind him; or have they all vanished utterly, even as perturbed Goblins must? Napoleon too, and his Moscow Retreats and Austerlitz Campaigns! Was it all other than the veriest Specter-hunt; which has now, with its howling tumult that made Night hideous, flitted away?—Ghosts! There are nigh a thousand million walking the Earth openly at noontide; some half-hundred have vanished from it, some half-hundred have arisen in it, ere thy watch ticks once.)

O Heaven, it is mysterious, it is awful to consider that we not only carry each a future Ghost within him; but are, in very deed, Ghosts! These Limbs, whence had we them; this stormy Force; this life-blood with its burning Passion? They are dust and shadow; a Shadow-system gathered round our ME: wherein, through some moments or years, the Divine Essence is to be revealed in the Flesh. That warrior on his strong war-horse, fire flashes through his eyes; force dwells in his arm

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and heart: but warrior and war-horse are a vision; a revealed Force, nothing more. Stately they tread the Earth, as if it were a firm substance: fool! the Earth is but a film; it cracks in twain, and warrior and war-horse sink beyond plummet's sounding. Plummet's? Fantasy herself will not follow them. A little while ago, they were not; a little while, and they are not, their very ashes are not.

(So has it been from the beginning, so will it be to the end. Generation after generation takes to itself the Form of a Body; and forth issuing from Cimmerian Night, on Heaven's mission APPEARS. What Force and Fire is in each he expends: one grinding in the mill of Industry; one hunter-like climbing the giddy Alpine heights of Science; one madly dashed in pieces on the rocks of Strife, in war with his fellows:—and then the Heaven-sent is recalled; his earthly Vesture falls away, and soon even to Sense becomes a vanished Shadow. Thus, like some wild-flaming, wild-thundering train of Heaven's Artillery, does this mysterious MANKIND thunder and flame, in long-drawn, quick-succeeding grandeur, through the unknown Deep. Thus, like a God-created, fire-breathing Spirit-host, we emerge from the Inane; haste stormfully across the astonished Earth; then plunge again into the Inane. Earth's mountains are leveled, and her seas filled up, in our passage: can the Earth, which is but dead and a vision, resist Spirits which have reality and are alive? On the hardest adamant some footprint of us is stamped in; the last Rear of the host will read traces of the earliest Van. But whence?—O Heaven, whither? Sense knows not; Faith knows not; only that it is through Mystery to Mystery, from God and to God.

"We are such stuff
As Dreams are made on, and our little Life
Is rounded with a sleep!")

Thomas Carlyle

MANY volumes have been written by way of commentary on Dante and his Book; yet, on the whole, with no great result. His Biography is, as it were, irrecoverably lost for us. An unimportant, wandering, sorrow-stricken man, not much note was taken of him while he lived; and the most of that has vanished, in the long space that now intervenes. It is five centuries since he ceased writing and living here. After all commentaries, the Book itself is mainly what we know of him. The Book;—and one might add that Portrait commonly attributed to Giotto, which, looking on it, you cannot help inclining to think genuine, whoever did it. To me it is a most touching face; perhaps of all faces that I know, the most so. Lonely there, painted as on vacancy, with the simple laurel wound round it; the deathless sorrow and pain, the known victory which is also deathless;—significant of the whole history of Dante! I think it is the mournfulest face that ever was painted from reality; an altogether tragic, heart-affecting face. There is in it, as foundation of it, the softness, tenderness, gentle affection as of a child; but all this is as if congealed into sharp contradiction, into abnegation, isolation, proud hopeless pain. A soft ethereal soul looking-out so stern, implacable, grim-trenchant, as from imprisonment of thick-ribbed ice! Withal it is a silent pain too, a silent scornful one: the lip is curled in a kind of godlike disdain of the thing that is eating-out his heart,—as if it were withal a mean insignificant thing, as if he whom it had power to torture and strangle were greater than it. The face of one wholly in

¹ From "The Hero as Poet," the third in a series of six lectures entitled *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*.

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protest, and life-long unsundering battle, against the world. Affection all converted into indignation: an implacable indignation; slow, equable, silent, like that of a god! The eye too, it looks-out as in a kind of *surprise*, a kind of inquiry, Why the world was of such a sort? This is Dante: so he looks, this "voice of ten silent centuries," and sings us his "mystic unfathomable song."

The little that we know of Dante's Life corresponds well enough with this Portrait and this Book. He was born at Florence, in the upper class of society, in the year 1265. His education was the best then going; much school-divinity, Aristotelian logic, some Latin classics,—no inconsiderable insight into certain provinces of things: and Dante, with his earnest intelligent nature, we need not doubt, learned better than most all that was learnable. He has a clear cultivated understanding, and of great subtlety; this best fruit of education he had contrived to realize from these scholastics. He knows accurately and well what lies close to him; but, in such a time, without printed books or free intercourse, he could not know well what was distant: the small clear light, most luminous for what is near, breaks itself into singular *chiaroscuro* striking on what is far off. This was Dante's learning from the schools. In life, he had gone through the usual destinies; been twice out campaigning as a soldier for the Florentine State, been on embassy; had in his thirty-fifth year, by natural gradation of talent and service, become one of the Chief Magistrates of Florence. He had met in boyhood a certain Beatrice Portinari, a beautiful little girl of his own age and rank, and grown-up thenceforth in partial sight of her, in some distant intercourse with her. All readers know his graceful affecting account of this; and then of their being parted; of her being wedded to another, and of her death soon after. She makes a great figure in Dante's Poem; seems to have made a great figure in his life. Of all beings it might seem as if she, held

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apart from him, far apart at last in the dim Eternity, were the only one he had ever with his whole strength of affection loved. She died: Dante himself was wedded; but it seems not happily, far from happily. I fancy, the rigorous earnest man, with his keen excitabilities, was not altogether easy to make happy.

We will not complain of Dante's miseries: had all gone right with him as he wished it, he might have been Prior, Podestà, or whatsoever they call it, of Florence, well accepted among neighbors,—and the world had wanted one of the most notable words ever spoken or sung. Florence would have had another prosperous Lord Mayor; and the ten dumb centuries continued voiceless, and the ten other listening centuries (for there will be ten of them and more) had no *Divina Commedia* to hear! We will complain of nothing. A nobler destiny was appointed for this Dante; and he, struggling like a man led towards death and crucifixion, could not help fulfilling it. Give *him* the choice of his happiness! He knew not, more than we do, what was really happy, what was really miserable.

In Dante's Priorship, the Guelf-Ghibelline, Bianchi-Neri, or some other confused disturbances rose to such a height, that Dante, whose party had seemed the stronger, was with his friends cast unexpectedly forth into banishment; doomed thenceforth to a life of woe and wandering. His property was all confiscated and more; he had the fiercest feeling that it was entirely unjust, nefarious in the sight of God and man. He tried what was in him to get reinstated; tried even by warlike surprisal, with arms in his hand: but it would not do; bad only had become worse. There is a record, I believe, still extant in the Florence Archives, dooming this Dante, where-soever caught, to be burnt alive. Burnt alive; so it stands, they say: a very curious civic document. Another curious document, some considerable number of years later, is a Letter of

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Dante's to the Florentine Magistrates, written in answer to a milder proposal of theirs, that he should return on condition of apologizing and paying a fine. He answers, with fixed stern pride: "If I cannot return without calling myself guilty, I will never return, *nunquam revertar*."

For Dante there was now no home in this world. He wandered from patron to patron, from place to place; proving, in his own bitter words, "How hard is the path, *Come è duro calle*." The wretched are not cheerful company; Dante, poor, and banished, with his proud earnest nature, with his moody humors, was not a man to conciliate men. Petrarch reports of him that being at Can della Scala's court, and blamed one day for his gloom and taciturnity, he answered in no courtier-like way. Della Scala stood among his courtiers, with mimes and buffoons (*nebulones ac histriones*) making him heartily merry; when turning to Dante, he said: "Is it not strange, now, that this poor fool should make himself so entertaining; while you, a wise man, sit there day after day, and have nothing to amuse us with at all?" Dante answered bitterly: "No, not strange; your Highness is to recollect the Proverb, *Like to Like*";—given the amuser, the amusee must also be given! Such a man, with his proud silent ways, with his sarcasms and sorrows, was not made to succeed at court. By degrees, it came to be evident to him that he had no longer any resting-place, or hope of benefit, in this earth. The earthly world had cast him forth, to wander, wander; no living heart to love him now; for his sore miseries there was no solace here.

The deeper naturally would the Eternal World impress itself on him; that awful reality over which, after all, this Time-world, with its Florences and banishments, only flutters as an unreal shadow. Florence thou shalt never see: but Hell and Purgatory and Heaven thou shalt surely see! What is Florence, Can della Scala, and the World and Life altogether? ETERNITY: thither, of a truth, not elsewhither, art thou and all

things bound! The great soul of Dante, homeless on earth, made its home more and more in that awful other world. Naturally his thoughts brooded on that, as on the one fact important for him. Bodied or bodiless, it is the one fact important for all men:—but to Dante, in that age, it was bodied in fixed certainty of scientific shape; he no more doubted of that *Malebolge* Pool, that it all lay there with its gloomy circles, with its *alti guai*,¹ and that he himself should see it, than we doubt that we should see Constantinople if we went thither. Dante's heart, long filled with this, brooding over it in speechless thought and awe, bursts forth at length into "mystic unfathomable song"; and this his *Divine Comedy*, the most remarkable of all modern Books, is the result.

It must have been a great solacement to Dante, and was, as we can see, a proud thought for him at times, That he, here in exile, could do this work; that no Florence, nor no man or men, could hinder him from doing it, or even much help him in doing it. He knew too, partly, that it was great; the greatest a man could do. "If thou follow thy star, *Se tu segui tua stella*,"—so could the Hero, in his forsakenness, in his extreme need, still say to himself: "Follow thou thy star, thou shalt not fail of a glorious haven!" The labor of writing, we find, and indeed could know otherwise, was great and painful for him; he says, This Book, "which has made me lean for many years." Ah yes, it was won, all of it, with pain and sore toil,—not in sport, but in grim earnest. His Book, as indeed most good Books are, has been written, in many senses, with his heart's blood. It is his whole history, this Book. He died after finishing it; not yet very old, at the age of fifty-six;—broken-hearted rather, as is said. He lies buried in his death-city Ravenna: *Hic claudor Dantes patriis extorris ab oris*. The Florentines begged back his body, in a century

¹ Deep wailings.

after; the Ravenna people would not give it. "Here am I Dante laid, shut-out from my native shores."

I said, Dante's Poem was a Song: it is Tieck who calls it "a mystic unfathomable Song"; and such is literally the character of it. Coleridge remarks very pertinently somewhere, that wherever you find a sentence musically worded, of true rhythm and melody in the words, there is something deep and good in the meaning, too. For body and soul, word and idea, go strangely together here as everywhere. Song: we said before, it was the Heroic of Speech! All *old* Poems, Homer's and the rest, are authentically Songs. I would say, in strictness, that all right Poems are; that whatsoever is not *sung* is properly no Poem, but a piece of Prose cramped into jingling lines,—to the great injury of the grammar, to the great grief of the reader, for most part! What we want to get at is the *thought* the man had, if he had any: why should he twist it into jingle, if he *could* speak it out plainly? It is only when the heart of him is rapt into true passion of melody, and the very tones of him, according to Coleridge's remark, become musical by the greatness, depth and music of his thoughts, that we can give him right to rhyme and sing; that we call him a Poet, and listen to him as the Heroic of Speakers,—whose speech *is* Song. Pretenders to this are many; and to an earnest reader, I doubt, it is for most part a very melancholy, not to say an insupportable business, that of reading rhyme! Rhyme that had no inward necessity to be rhymed;—it ought to have told us plainly, without any jingle, what it was aiming at. I would advise all men who *can* speak their thought, not to sing it; to understand that, in a serious time, among serious men, there is no vocation in them for singing it. Precisely as we love the true song, and are charmed by it as by something divine, so shall we hate the false song, and account it a mere wooden noise, a thing hollow, superfluous, altogether an insincere and offensive thing.

I give Dante my highest praise when I say of his *Divine Comedy* that it is, in all senses, genuinely a Song. In the very sound of it there is a *canto fermo*;¹ it proceeds as by a chant. The language, his simple *terza rima*,² doubtless helped him in this. One reads along naturally with a sort of *lilt*. But I add, that it could not be otherwise; for the essence and material of the work are themselves rhythmic. Its depth, and rapt passion and sincerity, makes it musical;—go *deep* enough, there is music everywhere. A true inward symmetry, what one calls an architectural harmony, reigns in it, proportionates it all: architectural; which also partakes of the character of music. The three kingdoms, *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, *Paradiso*, look-out on one another like compartments of a great edifice; a great supernatural world-cathedral, piled-up there, stern, solemn, awful; Dante's World of Souls! It is, at bottom, the *sincerest* of all Poems; sincerity, here too, we find to be the measure of worth. It came deep out of the author's heart of hearts; and it goes deep, and through long generations, into ours. The people of Verona, when they saw him on the streets, used to say, "*Eccovi l' uom ch' è stato all' Inferno*, See, there is the man that was in Hell!" Ah yes, he had been in Hell;—in Hell enough, in long severe sorrow and struggle; as the like of him is pretty sure to have been. *Commedias* that come-out *divine* are not accomplished otherwise. Thought, true labor of any kind, highest virtue itself, is it not the daughter of Pain? Born as out of the black whirlwind;—true *effort*, in fact, as of a captive struggling to free himself: that is Thought. In all ways we are "to become perfect through *suffering*."—But, as I say, no work known to me is so elaborated as this of Dante's. It has all been as if molten, in the hottest furnace of his soul. It had made him "lean" for

¹ Distinct and steady rhythm.

² A scheme of continuously interwoven triple rhymes. It is illustrated in the Dante translations reprinted in *Poetry*, pp. 298-305.

many years. Not the general whole only; every compartment of it is worked-out, with intense earnestness, into truth, into clear visuality. Each answers to the other; each fits in its place, like a marble stone accurately hewn and polished. It is the soul of Dante, and in this the soul of the middle ages, rendered forever rhythmically visible there. No light task; a right intense one: but a task which is *done*.

Perhaps one would say, *intensity*, with the much that depends on it, is the prevailing character of Dante's genius. Dante does not come before us as a large catholic mind; rather as a narrow, and even sectarian mind: it is partly the fruit of his age and position, but partly too of his own nature. His greatness has, in all senses, concentrated itself into fiery emphasis and depth. He is world-great not because he is world-wide, but because he is world-deep. Through all objects he pierces as it were down into the heart of Being. I know nothing so intense as Dante. Consider, for example, to begin with the outermost development of his intensity, consider how he paints. He has a great power of vision; seizes the very type of a thing; presents that and nothing more. You remember that first view he gets of the Hall of Dite:¹ *red* pinnacle, red-hot cone of iron glowing through the dim immensity of gloom;—so vivid, so distinct, visible at once and forever! It is as an emblem of the whole genius of Dante. There is a brevity, an abrupt precision in him: Tacitus is not briefer, more condensed; and then in Dante it seems, a natural condensation, spontaneous to the man. One smiting word; and then there is silence, nothing more said. His silence is more eloquent than words. It is strange with what a sharp decisive grace he snatches the true likeness of a matter: cuts into the matter as with a pen of fire. Plutus, the blustering giant, collapses at Virgil's rebuke; it is "as the sails sink, the mast being suddenly

¹ *Dite* is the Italian form of *Dis*. *Dis* (Pluto) is the god of the underworld in Greek mythology.

broken." Or that poor Brunetto Latini, with the *cotto aspetto*, "face *baked*," parched brown and lean; and the "fiery snow" that falls on them there, a "fiery snow without wind," slow, deliberate, never-ending! Or the lids of those Tombs; square sarcophaguses, in that silent dim-burning Hall, each with its Soul in torment; the lids laid open there; they are to be shut at the Day of Judgment, through Eternity. And how Farinata rises; and how Cavalcante falls—at hearing of his Son, and the past tense "*fue*"! ¹ The very movements in Dante have something brief; swift, decisive, almost military. It is of the inmost essence of his genius, this sort of painting. The fiery, swift Italian nature of the man, so silent, passionate, with its quick abrupt movements, its silent "pale rages," speaks itself in these things.

For though this of painting is one of the outermost developments of a man, it comes like all else from the essential faculty of him; it is physiognomical of the whole man. Find a man whose words paint you a likeness, you have found a man worth something; mark his manner of doing it, as very characteristic of him. In the first place, he could not have discerned the object at all, or seen the vital type of it, unless he had, what we may call, *sympathized* with it,—had sympathy in him to bestow on objects. He must have been *sincere* about it too; sincere and sympathetic: a man without worth cannot give you the likeness of any object; he dwells in vague outwardness, fallacy, and trivial hearsay about all objects. And indeed may we not say that intellect altogether expresses itself

¹ The word in question was not "*fue*"—"was," but "*ebbe*"—"had": the slip in memory, however, is not material to the illustration. Cavalcante thus addresses Dante (John Carlyle's translation, modified): "If through this blind prison thou goest by height of genius, where is my son and why is he not with thee?" The Poet replies: "Of myself I come not: he, that waits yonder [that is, Virgil], leads me through this place; whom perhaps your Guido had [or held] in disdain." The past tense *had* startles the father, who instantly suspects that his son is dead, eagerly questions Dante, only to have his suspicion confirmed by the Poet's manner, and then falls "supine."

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in this power of discerning what an object is? Whatsoever of faculty a man's mind may have will come out here. Is it even of business, a matter to be done? The gifted man is he who *sees* the essential point, and leaves all the rest aside as surplusage: it is his faculty too, the man of business's faculty, that he discern the true *likeness*, not the false superficial one, of the thing he has got to work in. And how much of *morality* is in the kind of insight we get of anything; "the eye seeing in all things what it brought with it the faculty of seeing"! To the mean eye all things are trivial, as certainly as to the jaundiced they are yellow. Raphael, the Painters tell us, is the best of all Portrait-painters withal. No most gifted eye can exhaust the significance of any object. In the commonest human face there lies more than Raphael will take-away with him.

Dante's painting is not graphic only, brief, true, and of a vividness as of fire in dark night; taken on the wider scale, it is everyway noble, and the outcome of a great soul. Francesca and her Lover, what qualities in that! ¹ A thing woven as out of rainbows, on a ground of eternal black. A small flute-voice of infinite wail speaks there, into our very heart of hearts. A touch of womanhood in it too: *della bella persona che mi fu tolta*; and how, even in the Pit of woe, it is a solace that *he* will never part from her! Saddest tragedy in these *alti guai*. And the racking winds, in that *aer bruno*,² whirl them away again, to wail forever!—Strange to think: Dante was the friend of this poor Francesca's father; Francesca herself may have sat upon the Poet's knee, as a bright innocent little child. Infinite pity, yet also infinite rigor of law: it is so Nature is made; it is so Dante discerned that she was made. What a paltry notion is that of his *Divine Comedy's* being a

¹ A translation of the episode is reprinted in *Poetry*, pp. 298-303. The Italian words a few lines below may be rendered "of the beautiful body that was taken from me."

² Dark air.

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poor splenetic impotent terrestrial libel; putting those into Hell whom he could not be avenged-upon on earth! I suppose if ever pity, tender as a mother's, was in the heart of any man, it was in Dante's. But a man who does not know rigor cannot pity either. His very pity will be cowardly, egoistic,—sentimentality, or little better. I know not in the world an affection equal to that of Dante. It is a tenderness, a trembling, longing, pitying love: like the wail of Æolian harps, soft, soft; like a child's young heart;—and then that stern, sore-saddened heart! These longings of his towards his Beatrice; their meeting together in the *Paradiso*; his gazing in her pure transfigured eyes, her that had been purified by death so long, separated from him so far:—one likens it to the song of angels; it is among the purest utterances of affection, perhaps the very purest, that ever came out of a human soul.

For the *intense* Dante is intense in all things; he has got into the essence of all. His intellectual insight as painter, on occasion too as reasoner, is but the result of all other sorts of intensity. Morally great, above all, we must call him; it is the beginning of all. His scorn, his grief are as transcendent as his love;—as indeed, what are they but the *inverse* or *converse* of his love? “*A Dio spiacenti ed a' nemici sui*, Hateful to God and to the enemies of God!” lofty scorn, unappeasable silent reprobation and aversion; “*Non ragionam di lor*, We will not speak of *them*, look only and pass.” Or think of this: “They have not the *hope* to die, *Non han speranza di morte*.” One day, it had risen sternly benign on the scathed heart of Dante, that he, wretched, never-resting, worn as he was, would full surely *die*; “that Destiny itself could not doom him not to die.” Such words are in this man. For rigor, earnestness and depth, he is not to be paralleled in the modern world; to seek his parallel we must go into the Hebrew Bible, and live with the antique Prophets there.

I do not agree with much modern criticism, in greatly pre-

ferring the *Inferno* to the two other parts of the Divine *Commedia*. Such preference belongs, I imagine, to our general Byronism of taste, and is like to be a transient feeling. The *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, especially the former, one would almost say, is even more excellent than it. It is a noble thing that *Purgatorio*, "Mountain of Purification"; an emblem of the noblest conception of that age. If Sin is so fatal, and Hell is and must be so rigorous, awful, yet in Repentance too is man purified; Repentance is the grand Christian act. It is beautiful how Dante works it out. The *tremolar dell' onde*, that "trembling" of the ocean-waves, under the first pure gleam of morning, dawning afar on the wandering Two, is as the type of an altered mood. Hope has now dawned; never-dying Hope, if in company still with heavy sorrow. The obscure sojourn of dæmons and reprobate is underfoot; a soft breathing of penitence mounts higher and higher, to the Throne of Mercy itself. "Pray for me," the denizens of that Mount of Pain all say to him.. "Tell my Giovanna to pray for me," my daughter Giovanna; "I think her mother loves me no more!" They toil painfully up by that winding steep, "bent-down like corbels of a building," some of them,—crushed-together so "for the sin of pride"; yet nevertheless in years, in ages and æons, they shall have reached the top, which is Heaven's gate, and by Mercy shall have been admitted in. The joy too of all, when one has prevailed; the whole Mountain shakes with joy, and a psalm of praise rises, when one soul has perfected repentance and got its sin and misery left behind! I call all this a noble embodiment of a true noble thought.

But indeed the Three compartments mutually support one another, are indispensable to one another. The *Paradiso*, a kind of inarticulate music to me, is the redeeming side of the *Inferno*; the *Inferno* without it were untrue. All three make up the true Unseen World, as figured in the Christianity of

the Middle Ages; a thing forever memorable, forever true in the essence of it, to all men. It was perhaps delineated in no human soul with such depth of veracity as in this of Dante's; a man *sent* to sing it, to keep it long memorable. Very notable with what brief simplicity he passes out of the every-day reality, into the Invisible one; and in the second or third stanza, we find ourselves in the World of Spirits; and dwell there, as among things palpable, indubitable! To Dante they *were* so; the real world, as it is called, and its facts, was but the threshold to an infinitely higher Fact of a World. At bottom the one was as *preternatural* as the other. Has not each man a soul? He will not only be a spirit, but is one. To the earnest Dante it is all one visible Fact; he believes it, sees it; is the Poet of it in virtue of that. Sincerity, I say again, is the saving merit, now as always.

Dante's Hell, Purgatory, Paradise, are a symbol withal, an emblematic representation of his Belief about this Universe:—some Critic in a future age, like those Scandinavian ones the other day,¹ who has ceased altogether to think as Dante did, may find this too all an "Allegory," perhaps an idle Allegory! It is a sublime embodiment, or sublimest, of the soul of Christianity. It expresses, as in huge world-wide architectural emblems, how the Christian Dante felt Good and Evil to be the two polar elements of this Creation, on which it all turns; that these two differ not by *preferability* of one to the other, but by incompatibility absolute and infinite; that the one is excellent and high as light and Heaven, the other hideous, black as Gehenna and the Pit of Hell! Everlasting Justice, yet with Penitence, with everlasting Pity,—all Christianity, as Dante and the Middle Ages had it, is emblemed here. Em-

¹ The lecture on "The Hero as Poet," from which the "Dante" is taken, was preceded in the series by lectures on "The Hero as Divinity," a brilliant discussion of Scandinavian mythology, and on "The Hero as Prophet," an eloquent plea for a recognition of essential truth and earnestness in the character of Mahomet. Allusions to these two addresses will be noted in the present extract.

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bled: and yet, as I urged the other day, with what entire truth of purpose; how unconscious of any embleming! Hell, Purgatory, Paradise: these things were not fashioned as emblems; was there, in our Modern European Mind, any thought at all of their being emblems! Were they not indubitable awful facts; the whole heart of man taking them for practically true, all Nature everywhere confirming them? So is it always in these things. Men do not believe an Allegory. The future Critic, whatever his new thought may be, who considers this of Dante to have been all got-up as an Allegory, will commit one sore mistake!—Paganism we recognized as a veracious expression of the earnest awestruck feeling of man towards the Universe; veracious, true once, and still not without worth for us. But mark here the difference of Paganism and Christianity; one great difference. Paganism emblemed chiefly the Operations of Nature; the destinies, efforts, combinations, vicissitudes of things and men in this world; Christianity emblemed the Law of Human Duty, the Moral Law of Man. One was for the sensuous nature: a rude helpless utterance of the *first* Thought of men,—the chief recognized Virtue, Courage, Superiority to Fear. The other was not for the sensuous nature, but for the moral. What a progress is here, if in that one respect only!—

And so in this Dante, as we said, had ten silent centuries, in a very strange way, found a voice. The *Divina Commedia* is of Dante's writing; yet in truth *it* belongs to ten Christian centuries, only the finishing of it is Dante's. So always. The craftsmen there, the smith with that metal of his, with these tools, with these cunning methods,—how little of all he does is properly *his* work! All past inventive men work there with him;—as indeed with all of us, in all things. Dante is the spokesman of the Middle Ages; the Thought they lived by stands here, in everlasting music. These sublime ideas of his,

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terrible and beautiful, are the fruit of the Christian Meditation of all the good men who had gone before him. Precious they; but also is not he precious? Much, had not he spoken, would have been dumb; not dead, yet living voiceless.

On the whole, is it not an utterance, this mystic Song, at once of one of the greatest human souls, and of the highest thing that Europe had hitherto realized for itself? Christianity, as Dante sings it, is another than Paganism in the rude Norse mind; another than "Bastard Christianity" half-articulate spoken in the Arab Desert seven hundred years before!—The noblest *idea* made *real* hitherto among men, is sung, and emblemed forth abidingly, by one of the noblest men. In the one sense and in the other, are we not right glad to possess it? As I calculate, it may last yet for long thousands of years. For the thing that is uttered from the inmost parts of a man's soul, differs altogether from what is uttered by the outer part. The outer is of the day, under the empire of mode; the outer passes away, in swift endless changes; the inmost is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. True souls, in all generations of the world, who look on this Dante, will find a brotherhood in him; the deep sincerity of his thoughts, his woes and hopes, will speak likewise to their sincerity; they will feel that this Dante too was a brother. Napoleon in Saint-Helena is charmed with the genial veracity of old Homer. The oldest Hebrew Prophet, under a vesture the most diverse from ours, does yet, because he speaks from the heart of man, speak to all men's hearts. It is the one sole secret of continuing long memorable. Dante, for depth of sincerity, is like an antique Prophet too; his words, like theirs, come from his very heart. One need not wonder if it were predicted that his Poem might be the most enduring thing our Europe has yet made; for nothing so endures as a truly spoken word. All cathedrals, pontificalities, brass and stone, and outer arrangements never so lasting, are brief in comparison to an unfath-

omable heart-song like this: one feels as if it might survive, still of importance to men, when these had all sunk into new irrecognizable combinations, and had ceased individually to be. Europe has made much; great cities, great empires, encyclopædias, creeds, bodies of opinion and practice: but it has made little of the class of Dante's Thought. Homer yet *is*, veritably present face to face with every open soul of us; and Greece, where is *it*? Desolate for thousands of years; away, vanished; a bewildered heap of stones and rubbish, the life and existence of it all gone. Like a dream; like the dust of King Agamemnon! Greece was; Greece, except in the *words* it spoke, is not.

The uses of this Dante? We will not say much about his "uses." A human soul who has once got into that primal element of *Song*, and sung-forth fitly somewhat therefrom, has worked in the *depths* of our existence; feeding through long times the life-roots of all excellent human things whatsoever,—in a way that "utilities" will not succeed well in calculating! We will not estimate the Sun by the quantity of gas-light it saves us; Dante shall be invaluable, or of no value. One remark I may make: the contrast in this respect between the Hero-Poet and the Hero-Prophet. In a hundred years, Mahomet, as we saw, had his Arabians at Granada and at Delhi; Dante's Italians seem to be yet very much where they were. Shall we say, then, Dante's effect on the world was small in comparison? Not so: his arena is far more restricted; but also it is far nobler, clearer;—perhaps not less but more important. Mahomet speaks to great masses of men, in the coarse dialect adapted to such; a dialect filled with inconsistencies, crudities, follies: on the great masses alone can he act, and there with good and with evil strangely blended. Dante speaks to the noble, the pure and great, in all times and places. Neither does he grow obsolete, as the other does. Dante burns as a pure star, fixed there in the firmament, at which the great and the high of all ages kindle themselves: he is the pos-

session of all the chosen of the world for uncounted time. Dante, one calculates, may long survive Mahomet. In this way the balance may be made straight again.

But, at any rate, it is not by what is called their effect on the world by what *we* can judge of their effect there, that a man and his work are measured. Effect? Influence? Utility? Let a man *do* his work; the fruit of it is the care of Another than he. It will grow its own fruit; and whether embodied in Caliph Thrones and Arabian Conquests, so that it "fills all Morning and Evening Newspapers," and all Histories, which are a kind of distilled Newspapers; or not embodied so at all;—what matters that? That is not the real fruit of it! The Arabian Caliph, in so far only as he did something, was something. If the great Cause of Man, and Man's work in God's Earth, got no furtherance from the Arabian Caliph, then no matter how many scimitars he drew, how many gold piasters pocketed, and what uproar and blaring he made in this world,—*he* was but a loud-sounding inanity and futility; at bottom, he *was* not at all. Let us honor the great empire of *Silence*, once more! The boundless treasury which we do *not* jingle in our pockets, or count up and present before men! It is perhaps, of all things, the usefulest for each of us to do, in these loud times.

5 WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT I LIVED FOR¹

Henry David Thoreau

AT a certain season of our life we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house. I have thus surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live. In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it,—took everything but a deed of it,—took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk,—cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on. This experience entitled me to be regarded as a sort of real-estate broker by my friends. Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly. What is a house but a *sedes*, a seat?—better if a country seat. I discovered many a site for a house not likely to be soon improved, which some might have thought too far from the village, but to my eyes the village was too far from it. Well, there I might live, I said; and there I did live, for an hour, a summer and a winter life; saw how I could let the years run off, buffet the winter through, and see the spring come in. The future inhabitants of this region, wherever they may

¹ From *Walden*. Introducing this book, Thoreau says: "When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself on the shore of Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only. I lived there two years and two months." Chapter I, "Economy," contends that it is possible for men to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves, and at the same time achieve ample leisure in which to cultivate their higher faculties; and it offers in evidence the author's own experience at Walden Pond. Chapter II, here reprinted, is a typical expression of Thoreau's character and ideas.

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place their houses, may be sure that they have been anticipated. An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, woodlot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage; and then I let it lie, fallow perchance, for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

My imagination carried me so far that I even had the refusal of several farms,—the refusal was all I wanted,—but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession. The nearest that I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheelbarrow to carry it on or off with; but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife—every man has such a wife—changed her mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him. Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell, if I was that man who had ten cents, or who had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together. However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm too, for I had carried it far enough; or rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and, as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left. I found thus that I had been a rich man without any damage to my poverty. But I retained the landscape, and have since annually carried off what it yielded without a wheelbarrow. With respect to landscapes,—

“I am monarch of all I *survey*,
My right there is none to dispute.”¹

¹ The first lines of a poem by William Cowper entitled *Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk during his solitary abode in the island of Juan Fernandez*. Thoreau, who had “as many trades as fingers,” sometimes worked at surveying, and in italicizing the word *survey* probably means to play upon it.

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I have frequently seen a poet withdraw, having enjoyed the most valuable part of a farm, while the crusty farmer supposed that he had got a few wild apples only. Why, the owner does not know it for many years when a poet has put his farm in rhyme, the most admirable kind of invisible fence, has fairly impounded it, milked it, skimmed it, and got all the cream, and left the farmer only the skimmed milk.

The real attractions of the Hollowell farm, to me, were: its complete retirement, being about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; its bounding on the river, which the owner said protected it by its fogs from frosts in the spring, though that was nothing to me; the gray color and ruinous state of the house and barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval between me and the last occupant; the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees, gnawed by rabbits, showing what kind of neighbors I should have; but above all, the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples, through which I heard the house-dog bark. I was in haste to buy it, before the proprietor finished getting out some rocks, cutting down the hollow apple trees, and grubbing up some young birches which had sprung up in the pasture, or, in short, had made any more of his improvements. To enjoy these advantages I was ready to carry it on; like Atlas, to take the world on my shoulders,—I have never heard what compensation he received for that,—and do all those things which had no other motive or excuse but that I might pay for it and be unmolested in my possession of it; for I knew all the while that it would yield the most abundant crop of the kind I wanted if I could only afford to let it alone. But it turned out as I have said.

All that I could say, then, with respect to farming on a large scale (I have always cultivated a garden), was, that I had

had my seeds ready. Many think that seeds improve with age. I have no doubt that time discriminates between the good and the bad; and when at last I shall plant, I shall be less likely to be disappointed. But I would say to my fellows, once for all, as long as possible live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail.

Old Cato, whose "*De Re Rusticâ*" is my "Cultivator," says, and the only translation I have seen makes sheer nonsense of the passage, "When you think of getting a farm, turn it thus in your mind, not to buy greedily, nor spare your pains to look at it, and do not think it enough to go round it once. The oftener you go there the more it will please you, if it is good." I think I shall not buy greedily, but go round and round it as long as I live, and be buried in it first, that it may please me the more at last.

The present¹ was my next experiment of this kind, which I purpose to describe more at length; for convenience, putting the experience of two years into one. As I have said, I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.

When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence Day, on the 4th of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defense against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window-casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum

¹ See the introductory footnote above, p. 79.

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would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited the year before. This was an airy, an unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a traveling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere.

The only house I had been the owner of before, if I except a boat, was a tent, which I used occasionally when making excursions in the summer, and this is still rolled up in my garret; but the boat, after passing from hand to hand, has gone down the stream of time. With this more substantial shelter about me, I had made some progress toward settling in the world. This frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the builder. It was suggestive somewhat as a picture in outlines. I did not need to go outdoors to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. The Harivansa¹ says, "An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning." Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those wilder and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager,—the woodthrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field-sparrow, the whippoorwill, and many others.

I was seated by the shore of a small pond, about a mile and

¹ A Sanskrit epic composition.

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a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and Lincoln, and about two miles south of that our only field known to fame, Concord battle-ground; but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon. For the first week, whenever I looked out on the pond, it impressed me like a tarn high up on the one side of a mountain, its bottom far above the surface of other lakes, and, as the sun arose, I saw it throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there, by degrees, its soft ripples or its smooth reflecting surface was revealed, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal conventicle. The very dew seemed to hang upon the trees later into the day than usual, as on the sides of mountains.

This small lake was of most value as a neighbor in the intervals of a gentle rainstorm in August, when, both air and water being perfectly still, but the sky overcast, mid-afternoon had all the serenity of evening, and the woodthrush sang around, and was heard from shore to shore. A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time; and the clear portion of the air above it being shallow and darkened by clouds, the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself so much the more important. From a hill-top near by, where the wood had been recently cut off, there was a pleasing vista southward across the pond, through a wide indentation in the hills which form the shore there, where their opposite sides sloping toward each other suggested a stream flowing out in that direction through a wooded valley, but stream there was none. That way I looked between and over the near green hills to some distant and higher ones in the horizon, tinged with blue. Indeed, by standing on tiptoe I could catch a glimpse of some of the peaks of the still bluer and more dis-

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tant mountain ranges in the northwest, those true-blue coins from heaven's own mint, and also of some portion of the village. But in other directions, even from this point, I could not see over or beyond the woods which surrounded me. It is well to have some water in your neighborhood, to give buoyancy to and float the earth. One value even of the smallest well is, that when you look into it you see that earth is not continent, but insular. This is as important as that it keeps butter cool. When I looked across the pond from this peak toward the Sudbury meadows, which in time of flood I distinguished elevated perhaps by a mirage in their seething valley, like a coin in a basin, all the earth beyond the pond appeared like a thin crust insulated and floated even by this small sheet of intervening water, and I was reminded that this on which I dwelt was but *dry land*.

Though the view from my door was still more contracted, I did not feel crowded or confined in the least. There was pasture enough for my imagination. The low shrub-oak plateau to which the opposite shore arose, stretched away toward the prairies of the West and the steppes of Tartary, affording ample room for all the roving families of men. "There are none happy in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon," said Damodara, when his herds required new and larger pastures.

Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me. Where I lived was as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers. We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system, behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair, far from noise and disturbance. I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe. If it were worth the while to settle in those parts near to the

Pleiades or the Hyades, to Aldebaran or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him. Such was that part of creation where I had squatted—

“There was a shepherd that did live,
And held his thoughts as high
As were the mounts whereon his flocks
Did hourly feed him by.”

What should we think of the shepherd's life if his flocks always wandered to higher pastures than his thoughts?

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshiper of Aurora as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond: that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of king Tching-thang to this effect: “Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again.” I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer's requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are

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not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly acquired force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory bells, and a fragrance filling the air—to a higher life than we fell asleep from; and thus the darkness bear its fruit, and prove itself to be good, no less than the light. That man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred, and auroral hour than he has yet profaned, has despaired of life, and is pursuing a descending and darkening way. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs, rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas¹ say, "All intelligences awake with the morning." Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon, are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? They are not such poor calculators. If they had not been overcome with drowsiness they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not

¹ Ancient sacred literature of the Hindus.

by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour. If we refused, or rather used up, such paltry information as we get, the oracles would distinctly inform us how this might be done.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to "glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon

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clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion. Our life is like a German Confederacy, made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating, so that even a German cannot tell you how it is bounded at any moment. The nation itself, with all its so-called internal improvements, which, by the way, are all external and superficial, is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment, cluttered with furniture and tripped up by its own traps, ruined by luxury and heedless expense, by want of calculation and a worthy aim, as the million households in the land; and the only cure for it as for them is in a rigid economy, a stern and more than Spartan simplicity of life and elevation of purpose. It lives too fast. Men think that it is essential that the *Nation* have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether *they* do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. If we do not get out sleepers, and forge rails, and devote days and nights to the work, but go to tinkering upon our *lives* to improve *them*, who will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall

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we get to heaven in season? But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. And when they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception. I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again.

Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches to-day to save nine to-morrow. As for *work*, we haven't any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus' dance, and cannot possibly keep our heads still. If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-rope, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell, there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, nor a woman, I might almost say, but would forsake all and follow that sound, not mainly to save property from the flames, but, if we will confess the truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, and we, be it known, did not set it on fire,—or to see it put out, and have a hand in it, if that is done as handsomely; yes, even if it were the parish church itself. Hardly a man takes a half-hour's nap

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after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, "What's the news?" as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels. Some give directions to be waked every half-hour, doubtless for no other purpose; and then to pay for it, they tell what they have dreamed. After a night's sleep the news is as indispensable as the breakfast. "Pray, tell me anything new that has happened to a man anywhere on this globe,"—and he reads it over his coffee and rolls, that a man has had his eyes gouged out this morning on the Wachito River; never dreaming the while that he lives in the dark unfathomed mammoth cave of this world, and has but the rudiment of an eye himself.

For my part, I could easily do without the post office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life—I wrote this some years ago—that were worth the postage. The penny-post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest.¹ And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter,—we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all *news*, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip. There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure,—

¹ Postage was formerly paid by the person receiving mail.

news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelve-month or twelve years beforehand with sufficient accuracy. As for Spain, for instance, if you know how to throw in Don Carlos and the Infanta, and Don Pedro and Seville and Granada, from time to time in the right proportions,—they may have changed the names a little since I saw the papers,—and serve up a bullfight when other entertainments fail, it will be true to the letter, and give us as good an idea of the exact state or ruin of things in Spain as the most succinct and lucid reports under this head in the newspapers: and as for England, almost the last significant scrap of news from that quarter was the Revolution of 1649; and if you have learned the history of her crops for an average year, you never need attend to that thing again, unless your speculations are of a merely pecuniary character. If one may judge who rarely looks into the newspapers, nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French revolution not excepted.

What news! how much more important to know what that is which was never old! “Kieou-he-yu (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu caused the messenger to be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot come to the end of them. The messenger being gone, the philosopher remarked: What a worthy messenger! What a worthy messenger!”¹ The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest at the end of the week,—for Sunday is the fit conclusion of an ill-spent week, and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one,—with this one other draggle-tail of a sermon, should shout with thunder-

¹ From the *Confucian Analects*: for another version of the anecdote see below, p. 386.

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ing voice,—“Pause! Avast! Why so seeming fast, but deadly slow?”

Shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men would steadily observe realities only, and not allow themselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. If we respected only what is inevitable and has a right to be, music and poetry would resound along the streets. When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence,—that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality. This is always exhilarating and sublime. By closing the eyes and slumbering, and consenting to be deceived by shows, men establish and confirm their daily life of routine and habit everywhere, which still is built on purely illusory foundations. Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure. I have read in a Hindu book, that “there was a king's son, who, being expelled in infancy from his native city, was brought up by a forester, and, growing up to maturity in that state, imagined himself to belong to the barbarous race with which he lived. One of his father's ministers having discovered him, revealed to him what he was, and the misconception of his character was removed, and he knew himself to be a prince. So soul,” continues the Hindu philosopher, “from the circumstances in which it is placed, mistakes its own character, until the truth is revealed to it by some holy teacher, and then it knows itself to be *Brahme*.”¹ I perceive that we inhabitants of New England live this mean life that we do because our vision does not penetrate the surface of things. We think that that *is* which *appears* to be. If a man should walk through

¹ Presumably: knows itself to be a portion of the divine essence.

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this town and see only the reality, where, think you, would the "Mill-dam" go to? If he should give us an account of the realities he beheld there, we should not recognize the place in his description. Look at a meeting-house, or a court-house, or a jail, or a shop, or a dwelling-house, and say what that thing really is before a true gaze, and they would all go to pieces in your account of them. Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages. And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us. The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions; whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid for us. Let us spend our lives in conceiving then. The poet or the artist never yet had so fair and noble a design but some of his posterity at least could accomplish it.

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature, and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails. Let us rise early and fast, or break fast, gently and without perturbation; let company come and let company go, let the bells ring and the children cry,—determined to make a day of it. Why should we knock under and go with the stream? Let us not be upset and overwhelmed in that terrible rapid and whirlpool called a dinner, situated in the meridian shallows. Weather this danger and you are safe, for the rest of the way is downhill. With unrelaxed nerves, with morning vigor, sail by it, looking another way, tied to the mast like Ulysses. If the engine whistles, let it whistle till it is hoarse for its pains. If the bell rings, why

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should we run? We will consider what kind of music they are like. Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe, through Paris and London, through New York and Boston and Concord, through church and state, through poetry and philosophy and religion, till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call *reality*, and say, This is, and no mistake; and then begin, having a *point d'appui*,¹ below freshet and frost and fire, a place where you might found a wall or a state, or set a lamp-post safely, or perhaps a gauge, not a Nilometer, but a Realometer, that future ages might know how deep a freshet of shams and appearances had gathered from time to time. If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on both its surfaces, as if it were a cimeter, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so you will happily conclude your mortal career. Be it life or death, we crave only reality. If we are really dying, let us hear the rattle in our throats and feel cold in the extremities; if we are alive, let us go about our business.

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my

¹ Fulcrum.

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head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and forepaws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining rod and thin rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

W. H. Hudson

YEARS ago, in a chapter concerning eyes in a book of Patagonian memories, I spoke of the unpleasant sensations produced in me by the sight of stuffed birds. Not bird skins in the drawers of a cabinet, it will be understood, these being indispensable to the ornithologist, and very useful to the larger class of persons who without being ornithologists yet take an intelligent interest in birds. The unpleasantness was at the sight of skins stuffed with wool and set up on their legs in imitation of the living bird, sometimes (oh, mockery!) in their "natural surroundings." These "surroundings" are as a rule constructed or composed of a few handfuls of earth to form the floor of the glass case—sand, rock, clay, chalk, or gravel; whatever the material may be it invariably has, like all "matter out of place," a grimy and depressing appearance. On the floor are planted grasses, sedges, and miniature bushes, made of tin or zinc and then dipped in a bucket of green paint. In the chapter referred to it was said, "When the eye closes in death, the bird, except to the naturalist, becomes a mere bundle of dead feathers; crystal globes may be put into the empty sockets, and a bold life-imitation attitude given to the stuffed specimen, but the vitreous orbs shoot forth no lifelike glances: the 'passion and the life whose fountains are within' have vanished, and the best work of the taxidermist, who has given a life to his bastard art, produces in the mind only sensations of irritation and disgust."

That, in the last clause, was wrongly writ. It should have

¹ Introductory chapter to *Birds and Man*. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., authorized publishers.

been *my* mind, and the minds of those who, knowing living birds intimately as I do, have the same feeling about them.

This, then, being my feeling about stuffed birds, set up in their "natural surroundings," I very naturally avoid the places where they are exhibited. At Brighton, for instance, on many occasions when I have visited and stayed in that town, there was no inclination to see the Booth Collection, which is supposed to be an ideal collection of British birds; and we know it was the life-work of a zealous ornithologist who was also a wealthy man, and who spared no pains to make it perfect of its kind. About eighteen months ago I passed a night in the house of a friend close to the Dyke Road, and next morning, having a couple of hours to get rid of, I strolled into the museum. It was painfully disappointing, for, though no actual pleasure had been expected, the distress experienced was more than I had bargained for. It happened that a short time before, I had been watching the living Dartford warbler, at a time when the sight of this small elusive creature is loveliest, for not only was the bird in his brightest feathers, but his surroundings were then most perfect—

The whin was frankincense and flame.

His appearance, as I saw him then and on many other occasions in the furze-flowering season, is fully described in a chapter in this book; but on this particular occasion while watching my bird I saw it in a new and unexpected aspect, and in my surprise and delight I exclaimed mentally, "Now I have seen the furze wren at his very best!"

It was perhaps a very rare thing—one of those effects of light on plumage which we are accustomed to see in birds that have glossed metallic feathers, and, more rarely, in other kinds. Thus the turtle-dove when flying from the spectator with a strong sunlight on its upper plumage, sometimes at a distance of two to three hundred yards, appears of a shining whiteness.

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I had been watching the birds for a couple of hours, sitting quite still on a tuft of heather among the furze-bushes, and at intervals they came to me, impelled by curiosity and solicitude, their nests being near, but, ever restless, they would never remain more than a few seconds at a time in sight. The prettiest and the boldest was a male, and it was this bird that in the end flew to a bush within twelve yards of where I sat, and perching on a spray about on a level with my eyes exhibited himself to me in his characteristic manner, the long tail raised, crest erect, crimson eye sparkling, and throat puffed out with his little scolding notes. But his color was no longer that of the furze wren: seen at a distance the upper plumage always appears slaty-black; near at hand it is of a deep slaty-brown; now it was dark, sprinkled or frosted over with a delicate grayish-white, the white of oxidized silver; and this rare and beautiful appearance continued for a space of about twenty seconds; but no sooner did he flit to another spray than it vanished, and he was once more the slaty-brown little bird with a chestnut-red breast.

It is unlikely that I shall ever again see the furze wren in this aspect, with a curious splendor wrought by the sunlight on the dark but semi-translucent delicate feathers of his mantle; but its image is in the mind, and, with a thousand others equally beautiful, remains to me a permanent possession.

As I went to see the famous Booth Collection, a thought of the bird I have just described came into my mind; and glancing round the big long room with shelves crowded with stuffed birds, like the crowded shelves of a shop, to see where the Dartford warblers were, I went straight to the case and saw a group of them fastened to a furze-bush, the specimens twisted by the stuffer into a variety of attitudes—ancient, rusty, dead little birds, painful to look at—a libel on nature and an insult to a man's intelligence.

It was a relief to go from this case to the others, which

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were not of the same degree of badness, but all, like the furze wrens, were in their natural surroundings—the pebbles, bit of turf, painted leaves, and what not, and, finally, a view of the wide world beyond, the green earth and the blue sky, all painted on the little square of deal or canvas which formed the back of the glass case.

Listening to the talk of other visitors who were making the round of the room, I heard many sincere expressions of admiration: they were really pleased and thought it all very wonderful. That is, in fact, the common feeling which most persons express in such places and, assuming that it is sincere, the obvious explanation is that they know no better. They have never properly seen anything in nature, but have looked always with mind and the inner vision preoccupied with other and familiar things—indoor scenes and objects, and scenes described in books. If they had ever looked at wild birds properly—that is to say, emotionally—the images of such sights would have remained in their minds; and, with such a standard for comparison, these dreary remnants of dead things set before them as restorations and as semblances of life would have only produced a profoundly depressing effect.

We hear of the educational value of such exhibitions, and it may be conceded that they might be made useful to young students of zoölogy, by distributing the specimens over a large area, arranged in scattered groups so as to give a rough idea of the relationship existing among its members, and of all together to other neighboring groups, and to others still further removed. The one advantage of such a plan to the young student would be, that it would help him to get rid of the false notion, which classification studied in books invariably produces, that nature marshals her species in a line or row, or her genera in a chain. But no such plan is ever attempted, probably because it would only be for the benefit of about

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one person in five hundred visitors, and the expense would be too great.

As things are, these collections help no one, and their effect is confusing and in many ways injurious to the mind, especially to the young. A multitude of specimens are brought before the sight, each and every one a falsification and degradation of nature, and the impression left is of an assemblage, or mob, of incongruous forms, and of confusion of colors. The one comfort is that Nature, wiser than our masters, sets herself against this rude system of overloading the brain. She is kind to her wild children in their intemperance, and is able to relieve the congested mind, too, from this burden. These objects in a museum are not and cannot be viewed emotionally, as we view living forms and all nature; hence they do not, and we being what we are, cannot register lasting impressions.

It needed a long walk on the downs to get myself once more in tune with the outdoor world after that distuning experience; but just before quitting the house in the Dyke Road an old memory came to me and gave me some relief, inasmuch as it caused me to smile. It was a memory of a tale of the Age of Fools, which I heard long years ago in the days of my youth.

I was at a small riverine port of the Plata River, called Ensenada de Barragan, assisting a friend to ship a number of sheep which he had purchased in Buenos Aires and was sending to the Banda Oriental—the little republic on the east side of the great sea-like river. The sheep, numbering about six thousand, were penned at the side of the creek where the small sailing ships were lying close to the bank, and a gang of eight men were engaged in carrying the animals on board, taking them one by one on their backs over a narrow plank, while I stood by keeping count. The men were gauchos,¹ all but one—a short, rather grotesque-looking Portuguese with one

¹ Native herdsmen of the South American pampas.

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eye. This fellow was the life and soul of the gang, and with his jokes and antics kept the others in a merry humor. It was an excessively hot day, and at intervals of about an hour the men would knock off work, and, squatting on the muddy bank, rest and smoke their cigarettes; and on each occasion the funny one-eyed Portuguese would relate some entertaining history. One of these histories was about the Age of Fools, and amused me so much that I remember it to this day. It was the history of a man of that remote age, who was born out of his time, and who grew tired of the monotony of his life, even of the society of his wife, who was no whit wiser than the other inhabitants of the village they lived in. And at last he resolved to go forth and see the world, and bidding his wife and friends farewell he set out on his travels. He traveled far and met with many strange and entertaining adventures, which I must be pardoned for not relating, as this is not a story-book. In the end he returned safe and sound to his home, a much richer man than when he started; and opening his pack he spread out before his wife an immense number of gold coins, with scores of precious stones, and trinkets of the greatest value. At the sight of this glittering treasure she uttered a great scream of joy and, jumping up, rushed from the room. Seeing that she did not return, he went to look for her, and after some searching discovered that she had rushed down to the wine-cellar and knocking open a large cask of wine had jumped into it and drowned herself for pure joy.

"Thus happily ended his adventures," concluded the one-eyed cynic, and they all got up and resumed their work of carrying sheep to the boat.

It was one of the adventures met with by the man of the tale in his travels that came into my mind when I was in the Booth Museum, and caused me to smile. In his wanderings in a thinly settled district, he arrived at a village where, passing

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by the church, his attention was attracted by a curious spectacle. The church was a big building with a rounded roof, and great blank windowless walls, and the only door he could see was no larger than the door of a cottage. From this door as he looked a small old man came out with a large empty sack in his hands. He was very old, bowed and bent with infirmities, and his long hair and beard were white as snow. Toddling out to the middle of the churchyard he stood still, and grasping the empty sack by its top, held it open between his outstretched arms for a space of about five minutes; then with a sudden movement of his hands he closed the sack's mouth, and still grasping it tightly, hurried back to the church as fast as his stiff joints would let him, and disappeared within the door. By and by he came forth again and repeated the performance, and then again, until the traveler approached and asked him what he was doing. "I am lighting the church," said the old man; and he then went on to explain that it was a large and a fine church, full of rich ornaments, but very dark inside—so dark that when people came to service the greatest confusion prevailed, and they could not see each other or the priest, nor the priest them. It had always been so, he continued, and it was a great mystery; he had been engaged by the fathers of the village a long time back, when he was a young man, to carry sunlight in to light the interior; but though he had grown old at his task, and had carried in many, many thousands of sackfuls of sunlight every year, it still remained dark, and no one could say why it was so.

It is not necessary to relate the sequel: the reader knows by now that in the end the dark church was filled with light, that the traveler was feasted and honored by all the people of the village, and that he left them loaded with gifts.

Parables of this kind as a rule can have no moral or hidden meaning in an age so enlightened as this; yet oddly enough we do find among us a delusion resembling that of

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the villagers who thought they could convey sunshine in a sack to light their dark church. It was one of a group or family of indoor delusions and illusions, which Mr. Sully has not mentioned in his book on that fascinating subject. One example of the particular delusion I have been speaking of, in which it is seen in its crudest form, may be given here.

A man walking by the water-side sees by chance a kingfisher fly past, its color a wonderful blue, far surpassing in beauty and brilliancy any blue he has ever seen in sky or water, or in flower or stone, or any other thing. No sooner has he seen than he wishes to become the possessor of that rare loveliness, that shining object which, he fondly imagines, will be a continual delight to him and to all in his house,—an ornament comparable to that splendid stone which the poor fisherman found in a fish's belly, which was his children's plaything by day and his candle by night. Forthwith he gets his gun and shoots it, and has it stuffed and put in a glass case. But it is no longer the same thing: the image of the living sunlit bird flashing past him is in his mind and creates a kind of illusion when he looks at his feathered mummy, but the luster is not visible to others.

It is because of the commonness of this delusion that stuffed kingfishers, and other brilliant species, are to be seen in the parlors of tens of thousands of cottages all over the land. Nor is it only those who live in cottages that make this mistake; those who care to look for it will find that it exists in some degree in most minds—the curious delusion that the luster which we see and admire is in the case, the coil, the substance which may be grasped, and not in the spirit of life which is within the atmosphere and miracle-working sunlight which are without.

To return to my own taste and feelings, since in the present chapter I must be allowed to write on Man (myself, to wit) and Birds, the other chapters being occupied with the

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subject of Birds and Man. It has always, or since I can remember, been my ambition and principal delight to see and hear every bird at its best. This is here a comparative term, and simply means an unusually attractive aspect of the bird, or a very much better than the ordinary one. This may result from a fortunate conjunction of circumstances, or may be due to a peculiar harmony between the creature and its surroundings; or in some instances, as in that given above of the Dartford warbler, to a rare effect of the sun. In still other cases, motions and antics, rarely seen, singularly graceful, or even grotesque, may give the best impression. After one such impression has been received, another equally excellent may follow at a later date: in that case the second impression does not obliterate, or is not superimposed upon the former one; both remain as permanent possessions of the mind, and we may thus have several mental pictures of the same species.

It is the same with all minds with regard to the objects and scenes which happen to be of special interest. The following illustration will serve to make the matter clearer to readers who are not accustomed to pay attention to their own mental processes. When any common object, such as a chair, or spade, or apple, is thought of or spoken of, an image or a picture of it instantly comes before the mind's eye; not of a particular spade or apple, but of a type representing the object which exists in the mind ready for use on all occasions. With the question of the origin of this type, this spade or apple of the mind, we need not concern ourselves here. If the object thought or spoken of be an animal—a horse let us say, the image seen in the mind will in most cases be as in the foregoing case a type existing in the mind and not of an individual. But if a person is keenly interested in horses generally, and is a rider and has owned and loved many horses, the image of some particular one which he has known or has looked at with appreciative eyes will come to mind; and he will also be able

to call up the images of dozens or of scores of horses he has known or seen in the same way. If on the other hand we think of a rat, we see not any individual, but a type, because we have no interest in or no special feeling with regard to such a creature, and all the successive images we receive of it become merged in one—the type which already existed in the mind and was probably formed very early in life. With the dog for subject the case is different: dogs are more with us—we know them intimately and have perhaps regarded many individuals with affection; hence the image that rises in the mind is as a rule of some dog we have known.

The important point to be noted is, that while each and every thing we see registers an impression in the brain, and may be recalled several minutes, or hours, or even days, afterwards, the only permanent impressions are of the sights which we have viewed emotionally. We may remember that we have seen a thousand things in which at some later period an interest has been born in the mind, when it would be greatly to our pleasure and even profit to recover their images, and we strive and ransack our brains to do so, but all in vain: they have been lost forever because we happened not to be interested in the originals, but viewed them with indifference, or unemotionally.

With regard to birds, I see them mentally in two ways: each species which I have known and observed in its wild state has its type in the mind—an image which I invariably see when I think of the species; and, in addition, one or two or several, in some cases as many as fifty, images of the same species of bird as it appeared at some exceptionally favorable moment and was viewed with peculiar interest and pleasure.

Of hundreds of such enduring images of our commonest species I will here describe one before concluding with this part of the subject.

The long-tailed or bottle tit is one of the most delicately

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pretty of our small woodland birds, and among my treasures, in my invisible and intangible album, there were several pictures of him which I had thought unsurpassable, until a day two years ago when a new and better one was garnered. I was walking a few miles from Bath by the Avon where it is not more than thirty or forty yards wide, on a cold, windy, very bright day in February. The opposite bank was lined with bushes growing close to the water, the roots and lower trunks of many of them being submerged, as the river was very full; and behind this low growth the ground rose abruptly, forming a long green hill crowned with tall beeches. I stopped to admire one of the bushes across the stream, and I wish I could now say what its species was: it was low with widespread branches close to the surface of the water, and its leafless twigs were adorned with catkins resembling those of the black poplar, as long as a man's little finger, of a rich dark-red or maroon color. A party of about a dozen long-tailed tits were traveling, or drifting, in their usual desultory way, through the line of bushes towards this point, and in due time they arrived, one by one, at the bush I was watching, and finding it sheltered from the wind they elected to remain at that spot. For a space of fifteen minutes I looked on with delight, rejoicing at the rare chance which had brought that exquisite bird- and plant-scene before me. The long deep-red pendent catkins and the little pale birdlings among them in their gray and rose-colored plumage, with long graceful tails and minute round, parrotty heads; some quietly perched just above the water, others moving about here and there, occasionally suspending themselves back downwards from the slender terminal twigs—the whole mirrored below. That magical effect of water and sunlight gave to the scene a somewhat fairy-like, an almost illusory, character.

Such scenes live in their loveliness only for him who has seen and harvested them: they cannot be pictured forth to an-

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other by words, nor with the painter's brush, though it be charged with *tintas orientales*;¹ least of all photography, which brings all things down to one flat, monotonous, colorless shadow of things, weary to look at.

From sights we pass to consideration of sounds, and it is unfortunate that the two subjects have to be treated consecutively instead of together, since with birds they are more intimately joined than in any other order of beings; and in images of bird life at its best they sometimes cannot be dissociated;—the aërial form of the creature, its harmonious, delicate tints, and its grace of motion; and the voice, which, loud or low, is aërial too, in harmony with the form.

We know that as with sights so it is with sounds: those to which we listen attentively, appreciatively, or in any way emotionally, live in the mind, to be recalled and reheard at will. There is no doubt that in a large majority of persons this retentive power is far less strong with regard to sounds than sights, but we are all supposed to have it in some degree. So far, I have met with but one person, a lady, who is without it: sounds, in her case, do not register an impression in the brain, so that with regard to this sense she is in the condition of civilized man generally with regard to smells. I say of civilized man, being convinced that this power has become obsolete in us, although it appears to exist in savages and in the lower animals. The most common sounds, natural or artificial, the most familiar bird-notes, the lowing of the cow, the voices of her nearest and dearest friends, and simplest melodies sung or played, cannot be reproduced in her brain: she remembers them as agreeable sounds, just as we all remember that certain flowers and herbs have agreeable odors; but she does not *hear* them. Probably there are not many persons in the same case; but in such matters it is hard to know what the real

¹ Oriental colors.

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condition of another's mind may be. Our acquaintances refuse to analyze or turn themselves inside out merely to gratify a curiosity which they may think idle. In some cases they perhaps have a kind of superstition about such things: the secret processes of their mind are *their* secret, or "business," and, like the secret and *real* name of a person among some savage tribes, not to be revealed but at the risk of giving to another a mysterious power over their lives and fortunes. Even worse than the reticent, the superstitious, and the simply unintelligent, is the highly imaginative person who is only too ready to answer all inquiries, who catches at what you say in explanation, divines what you want, and instantly (and unconsciously) invents something to tell you.

But we may, I think, take it for granted that the faculty of retaining sounds is as universal as that of retaining sights, although, speaking generally, the impressions of sounds are less perfect and lasting than those which relate to the higher, more intellectual sense of vision; also that this power varies greatly in different persons. Furthermore, we see in the case of musical composers, and probably of most musicians who are devoted to their art, that this faculty is capable of being trained and developed to an extraordinary degree of efficiency. The composer sitting pen in hand to write his score in his silent room hears the voices and the various instruments, the solos and orchestral sounds, which are in his thoughts. It is true that he is a creator, and listens mentally to compositions that have never been previously heard; but he cannot imagine, or cannot *hear* mentally, any note or combination of notes which he has never heard with his physical sense. In creating he selects from the infinite variety of sounds whose images exist in his mind, and, rearranging them, produces new effects.

The difference in the brains, with regard to their sound-storing power, of the accomplished musician and the ordinary

person who does not know one tune from another and has but fleeting impressions of sounds in general, is no doubt enormous; probably it is as great as that which exists in the logical faculty between a professor of that science in one of the universities and a native of the Andaman Islands or of Tierra del Fuego. It is, we see, a question of training: any person with a normal brain who is accustomed to listen appreciatively to certain sounds, natural or artificial, must store his mind with the images of such sounds. And the open-air naturalist, who is keenly interested in the language of birds, and has listened with delight to a great variety of species, should be as rich in such impressions as the musician is with regard to musical sounds. Unconsciously he has all his life been training the faculty.

With regard to the durability of the images, it may be thought by some that, speaking of birds, only those which are revived and restored, so to speak, from time to time by fresh sense-impressions remain permanently distinct. That would naturally be the first conclusion most persons would arrive at, considering that the sound-images which exist in their minds are of the species found in their own country, which they are able to hear occasionally, even if at very long intervals in some cases. My own experience proves that it is not so; that a man may cut himself off from the bird life he knows, to make his home in another region of the globe thousands of miles away, and after a period exceeding a quarter of a century, during which he has become intimate with a wholly different bird life, to find that the old sound-images, which have never been refreshed with new sense-impressions, are as distinct as they ever were, and seem indeed imperishable.

I confess that, when I think of it, I am astonished myself at such an experience, and to some it must seem almost incredible. It will be said, perhaps, that in the infinite variety

of bird-sounds heard anywhere there must be innumerable notes which closely resemble, or are similar to, those of other species in other lands, and, although heard in a different order, the old images of cries and calls and songs are thus indirectly refreshed and kept alive. I do not think that has been any real help to me. Thus, I think of some species which has not been thought of for years, and its language comes back at call to my mind. I listen mentally to its various notes, and there is not one in the least like the notes of any British species. These images have therefore never received refreshment. Again, where there is a resemblance, as in the trisyllabic cry of the common sandpiper and another species, I listen mentally to one, then to the other, heard so long ago, and hear both distinctly, and comparing the two, find a considerable difference, one being a thinner, shriller, and less musical sound than the other. Still again, in the case of the blackbird, which has a considerable variety in its language, there is one little chirp familiar to everyone—a small round drop of sound of a musical, bell-like character. Now it happens that one of the true thrushes of South America, a bird resembling our song-thrush, has an almost identical bell-like chirp, and so far as that small drop of sound is concerned the old image may be refreshed by new sense-impressions. Or I might even say that the original image has been covered by the later one, as in the case of the laughter-like cries of the Dominican and the black-backed gulls. But with regard to the thrushes, excepting that small drop of sound, the language of the two species is utterly different. Each has a melody perfect of its kind: the song of the foreign bird is not fluty nor mellow nor placid like that of the blackbird, but has in a high degree that quality of plain-tiveness and gladness commingled which we admire in some fresh and very beautiful human voices, like that described in Lowell's lines "To Perdita, Singing":—

It hath caught a touch of sadness,
 Yet it is not sad;
 It hath tones of clearest gladness,
 Yet it is not glad.¹

Again, that foreign song is composed of many notes, and is poured out in a stream, as a sky-lark sings; and it is also singular on account of the contrast between these notes which suggest human feeling and a purely metallic, bell-like sound, which, coming in at intervals, has the effect of the triangle in a band of wind instruments. The image of this beautiful song is as distinct in my mind as that of the blackbird which I heard every day last summer from every green place.

Doubtless there are some and perhaps a good many ornithologists among us who have been abroad to observe the bird life of distant countries, and who when at home find that the sound-impressions they have received are not persistent, or, if not wholly lost, that they grow faint and indistinct, and become increasingly difficult to recall. They can no longer *listen* to those over-sea notes and songs as they can, mentally, to the cuckoo's call in spring, the wood-owl's hoot, to the song of the skylark and of the tree-pipit, the reeling of the night-jar and the startling scream of the woodland jay, the deep human-like tones of the raven, the inflected wild cry of the curlew, and the beautiful wild whistle of the widgeon, heard in the silence of the night on some lonely mere.

The reason is that these, and numberless more, are the sounds of the bird life of their own home and country; the living voices to which they listened when they were young and the senses keener than now, and their enthusiasm greater; they were in fact heard with an emotion which the foreign species never inspired in them, and thus heard, the images of the sounds were made imperishable.

In my case the foreign were the home birds, and on that

¹ The first strophes of the poem are reprinted in *Poetry*, pp. 474f.

account alone more to me than all others; yet I escaped that prejudice which the British naturalist is never wholly without—the notion that the home bird is, intrinsically, better worth listening to than the bird abroad. Finally, on coming to this country, I could not listen to the birds coldly, as an English naturalist would to those of, let us say, Queensland, or Burma, or Canada, or Patagonia, but with an intense interest; for these were the birds which my forbears had known and listened to all their lives long; and my imagination was fired by all that had been said of their charm, not indeed by frigid ornithologists, but by a long succession of great poets, from Chaucer down to those of our own time. Hearing them thus emotionally, their notes became permanently impressed on my mind, and I found myself the happy possessor of a large number of sound-images representing the bird language of two widely separated regions.

To return to the main point—the durability of the impressions both of sight and sound.

In order to get a more satisfactory idea of the number and comparative strength or vividness of the images of twenty-six years ago remaining to me after so long a time than I could by merely thinking about the subject, I drew up a list of the species of birds observed by me in the two adjoining districts of La Plata and Patagonia. Against the name of each species the surviving sight- and sound-impressions were set down; but on going over this first list and analysis, fresh details came to mind, and some images which had become dimmed all at once grew bright again, and to bring these in, the work had to be redone; then it was put away and the subject left for a few days to the “subliminal consciousness,” after which I took it up once more and rewrote it all—list and analysis; and I think it now gives a fairly accurate account of the state of these old impressions as they exist in memory.

This has not been done solely for my own gratification. I

confess to a very strong feeling of curiosity as to the mental experience on this point of other field naturalists; and as these, or some of them, may have the same wish to look into their neighbors' minds that I have, it may be that the example given here will be followed.

My list comprises 226 species—a large number to remember when we consider that it exceeds by about 16 or 18 the number of British species; that is to say, those which may truly be described as belonging to these islands, without including the waifs and strays and rare visitants which by a fiction are described as British birds. Of the 226, the sight-impressions of 10 have become indistinct, and one has been completely forgotten. The sight of a specimen might perhaps revive an image of this lost one as it was seen, a living wild bird; but I do not know. This leaves 215, every one of which I can mentally see as distinctly as I see in my mind the common species I am accustomed to look at every day in England—thrush, starling, robin, etc.

A different story has to be told with regard to the language. To begin with, there are no fewer than 34 species of which no sound-impressions were received. These include the habitually silent kinds—the stork, which rattles its beak but makes no vocal sound, the painted snipe, the wood ibis, and a few more; species which were rarely seen and emitted no sound—condor, Muscovy duck, harpy eagle, and others; species which were known only as winter visitants, or seen on migration, and which at such seasons were invariably silent.

Thus, those which were heard number 192. Of these the language of 7 species has been completely forgotten, and of 31 the sound-impressions have now become indistinct in varying degrees. Deducting those whose notes have become silent and are not clearly heard in the mind, there remain 154 species which are distinctly remembered. That is to say, when

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I think of them and their language, the cries, calls, songs, and other sounds are reproduced in the mind.

Studying the list, in which the species are ranged in order according to their affinities, it is easy to see why the language of some, although not many, has been lost or has become more or less indistinct. In some cases it is because there was nothing distinctive or in any way attractive in the notes; in other cases because the images have been covered and obliterated by others—the stronger images of closely allied species. In the two American families of tyrant-birds and woodhewers, neither of which are songsters, there is in some of the closely related species a remarkable family resemblance in their voices. Listening to their various cries and calls, the trained ear of the ornithologist can easily distinguish them and identify the species; but after years the image of the more powerful or the better voices of, say, two or three species in a group of four or five absorb and overcome the others. I cannot find a similar case among British species to illustrate this point, unless it be that of the meadow- and rock-pipit. Strongly as the mind is impressed by the measured tinkling notes of these two songs, emitted as the birds descend to earth, it is not probable that any person who had not heard them for a number of years would be able to distinguish or keep them separate in his mind—to hear them in their images as two distinct songs.

In the case of the good singers in that distant region, I find the voices continue remarkably distinct, and as an example will give the two melodious families of the finches and the troupials (*Îcteridæ*), the last an American family, related to the finches, but starling-like in appearance, many of them brilliantly colored. Of the first I am acquainted with 12 and of the second with 14 species.

Here then are 26 highly vocal species, of which the songs, calls, chirps, and various other notes, are distinctly remembered in 23. Of the other three one was silent—a small mi-

gratory finch resembling the bearded-tit in its reed-loving habits, its long tail and slender shape, and partly too in its coloring. I listened in vain for this bird's singing notes. Of the remaining two one is a finch, the other a troupial; the first a pretty bird, in appearance a small hawfinch with its whole plumage a lovely glaucous blue; a poor singer with a low rambling song: the second a bird of the size of a starling, colored like a golden oriole, but more brilliant; and this one has a short impetuous song composed of mixed guttural and clear notes.

Why is this rather peculiar song, of a species which on account of its coloring and pleasing social habits strongly impresses the mind, less distinct in memory than the songs of other troupials? I believe it is because it is a rare thing to hear a single song. They perch in a tree in company, like birds of paradise, and no sooner does one open his beak than all burst out together, and their singing strikes on the sense in a rising and falling tempest of confused sound. But it may be added that though these two songs are marked "indistinct" in the list, they are not very indistinct, and become less so when I listen mentally with closed eyes.

In conclusion, it is worthy of remark that the good voices, as to quality, and the powerful ones, are not more enduring in their images than those which were listened to appreciatively for other reasons. Voices which have the quality of ventriloquism, or are in any way mysterious, or are suggestive of human tones, are extremely persistent; and such voices are found in owls, pigeons, snipe, rails, greves, night-jars, tinamous, rheas, and in some passerine birds. Again, the swallows are not remarkable as singers compared with thrushes, finches, and other melodists; but on account of their intrinsic charm and beauty, their interesting habits, and the sentiment they inspire, we listen to them emotionally; and I accordingly find that the language of the five species of swallows I was formerly accus-

tomed to see and hear continues as distinct in my mind as that of the chimney swallow, which I listen to every summer in England.

I had meant in this chapter to give three or four or half a dozen instances of birds seen at their best, instead of the one I have given—that of the long-tailed tit; and as many more images in which a rare, unforgettable effect was produced by melody. For as with sights so it is with sounds: for these too there are “special moments,” which have “special grace.” But this chapter is already longer than it was ever meant to be, and something on another subject yet remains to be said.

The question is sometimes asked, What is the charm which you find, or say you find, in nature? Is it real, or do these words so often repeated have a merely conventional meaning, like so many other words and phrases which men use with regard to other things? Birds, for instance: apart from the interest which the ornithologist must take in his subject, what substantial happiness can be got out of these shy creatures, mostly small and not too well seen, that fly from us when approached, and utter sounds which at their best are so poor, so thin, so trivial, compared with our soul-stirring human music?

That, briefly, is the indoor view of the subject—the view of those who, to begin with, were perhaps town-born and town-bred; who have existed amid conditions, occupied with work and pleasures, the reflex effect of which, taken altogether and in the long-run, is to dim and even deaden some of the brain’s many faculties, and chiefly this best faculty of preserving impressions of nature for long years or to the end of life in all their original freshness.

Some five or six years ago I heard a speech about birds delivered by Sir Edward Grey, in which he said that the

love and appreciation and study of birds was something fresher and brighter than the second-hand interests and conventional amusements in which so many in this day try to live; that the pleasure of seeing and listening to them was purer and more lasting than any pleasures of excitement, and, in the long-run, "happier than personal success." That was a saying to stick in the mind, and it is probable that some who listened failed to understand. Let us imagine that in addition to this miraculous faculty of the brain of storing innumerable brilliant images of things seen and heard, to be reproduced at call to the inner sense, there existed in a few gifted persons a correlated faculty by means of which these treasured images could be thrown at will into the mind of another; let us further imagine that some one in the audience who had wondered at that saying, finding it both dark and hard, had asked me to explain it; and that in response I had shown him, as by a swift succession of lightning flashes, a score or a hundred images of birds at their best—the unimaginable loveliness, the sunlit color, the grace of form and of motion, and the melody—how great the effect of even that brief glance into a new unknown world would have been! And if I had then said: All that you have seen—the pictures in one small room in a house of many rooms—is not after all the main thing; *that* it would be idle to speak of, since you cannot know what you do not feel, though it should be told you many times; this only can be told—the enduring images are but an incidental result of a feeling which existed already; they were never looked for, and are a free gift from nature to her worshiper;—if I said this to him, the words of the speech which had seemed almost sheer insanity a little while before would have acquired a meaning and an appearance of truth.

It has curiously happened that while writing these concluding sentences some old long-forgotten lines which I read

in my youth came suddenly into my mind, as if some person sitting invisible at my side and thinking them apposite to the subject had whispered them into my ear. They are lines addressed to the Merrimac River by an American poet—whether a major or minor I do not know, having forgotten his name. In one stanza he mentions the fact that “young Brissot”¹ looked upon this stream in its bright flow—

And bore its image o’er the deep
To soothe a martyr’s sadness,
And fresco in his troubled sleep
His prison walls with gladness.

Brissot is not generally looked upon as a “martyr” on this side of the Atlantic, nor was he allowed to enjoy his “troubled sleep” too long after his fellow-citizens (especially the great and sea-green Incorruptible²) had begun in their fraternal fashion to thirst for his blood; but we can easily believe that during those dark days in the Bastille the image and vision of the beautiful river thousands of miles away was more to him than all his varied stores of knowledge, all his schemes for the benefit of suffering humanity, and perhaps even a better consolation than his philosophy.

It is indeed this “gladness” of old sunshine stored within us—if we have had the habit of seeing beauty everywhere and of viewing all beautiful things with appreciation—this incalculable wealth of images of vanished scenes, which is one of our best and dearest possessions, and a joy forever.

“What asketh man to have?” cried Chaucer, and goes on to say in bitterest words that “now with his love” he must soon lie in “the coldë grave—alone, withouten any companie.”

What he asketh to have, I suppose, is a blue diamond—

¹ Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville, a conspicuous figure in the French Revolution.

² Carlyle’s designation for Robespierre, in his history of the French Revolution.

some unattainable good; and in the meantime, just to go on with, certain pleasant things which perish in the using.

These same pleasant things are not to be despised, but they leave nothing for the mind in hungry days to feed upon, and can be of no comfort to one who is shut up within himself by age and bodily infirmities and the decay of the senses; on the contrary, the recollection of them at such times, as has been said,¹ can but serve to make a present misery more poignantly felt.

It was the nobly expressed consolation of an American poet, now dead, when standing in the summer sunshine amid a fine prospect of woods and hills, to think, when he remembered the darkness of decay and the grave, that he had beheld in nature, though but for a moment,

The brightness of the skirts of God.

¹ Originally by Dante, in the fifth canto of the *Inferno*. See *Poetry*, p. 302.

Cicero

*F*ANNIUS and Scævola are imagined as making a visit to their father-in-law, the "sage Lælius," who has recently suffered the loss by death of his friend Scipio Africanus. Lælius has just been speaking of his strong expectations that the memory of the friendship between Scipio and himself would prove immortal.

Fannius. Your expectations, Lælius, cannot fail of being realized. And now, as you have mentioned Friendship, and we are entirely disengaged, it would be extremely acceptable to me (and I am persuaded it would likewise be so to Scævola) if, agreeably to your usual readiness upon other occasions of just inquiry, you would give us your opinion concerning the true nature of this connection, the extent of its obligations, and the maxims by which it ought to be conducted.

Scævola. Fannius has prevented me in the request I was intending to make; your compliance, therefore, will equally confer an obligation upon both of us.

Lælius. I should very willingly gratify your desires if I thought myself equal to the task, for the subject is interesting, and we are at present, as Fannius observed, entirely at leisure; but I am too sensible of my own insufficiency to venture thus unprepared upon the disquisition of a topic which requires much consideration to be treated as it deserves. Unpremeditated dissertations of this kind can only be expected from those Grecian geniuses, who are accustomed to speak on the sudden upon any given question; and to those learned disputants I must refer

¹ From the dialogue *Of Friendship*. Translated by William Melmoth.

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you, if you wish to hear the subject properly discussed. As for myself, I can only exhort you to look on Friendship as the most valuable of all human possessions, no other being equally suited to the moral nature of man, or so applicable to every state and circumstance, whether of prosperity or adversity, in which he can possibly be placed. But at the same time I lay it down as a fundamental axiom that "true Friendship can only subsist between those who are animated by the strictest principles of honor and virtue." When I say this, I would not be thought to adopt the sentiments of those speculative moralists who pretend that no man can justly be deemed virtuous who is not arrived at that state of absolute perfection which constitutes, according to their ideas, the character of genuine wisdom. This opinion may appear true, perhaps, in theory, but is altogether inapplicable to any useful purpose of society, as it supposes a degree of virtue to which no mortal was ever capable of rising. It is not, therefore, that notional species of merit which imagination may possibly conceive, or our wishes perhaps form, that we have reason to expect and require in a friend; it is those moral attainments alone which we see actually realized among mankind. And, indeed, I can never be persuaded to think that either Fabricius, or Coruncanius, or Curius, whom our forefathers justly revered for the superior rectitude of their conduct, were sages according to that sublime criterion which these visionary philosophers have endeavored to establish. I should be contented, however, to leave them in the undisturbed possession of their arrogant and unintelligible notions of virtue, provided they would allow that the great persons I have named merited at least the character of good men; but even this, it seems, they are not willing to grant, still contending, with their usual obstinacy, that goodness is an attribute which can only be ascribed to their perfect sage. I shall venture, nevertheless, to adjust my own measure of that quality by the humbler standard of plain com-

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mon sense. In my opinion, therefore, whoever (like those distinguished models I just now mentioned) restrains his passions within the bounds of reason, and uniformly acts, in all the various relations of life, upon one steady, consistent principle of approved honor, justice, and beneficence, that man is in reality, as well as in common estimation, strictly and truly good; inasmuch as he regulates his conduct (so far, I mean, as is compatible with human frailty) by a constant obedience to those best and surest guides of moral rectitude, the sacred laws of nature.

In tracing these laws it seems evident, I think, that man, by the frame of his moral constitution, is disposed to consider himself as standing in some degree of social relation to the whole species in general; and that this principle acts with more or less vigor, according to the distance at which he is placed with respect to any particular community or individual of his kind. Thus it may be observed to operate with greater force between fellow-citizens of the same commonwealth than in regard to foreigners, and between the several members of the same family than towards those among whom there is no common tie of consanguinity. In the case of relations, indeed, this principle somewhat rises in its strength, and produces a sort of instinctive amity; but an amity, however, of no great firmness or solidity. The inferiority of this species of natural connection, when compared with that which is the consequence of voluntary choice, appears from this single consideration: that the former has not the least dependence upon the sentiments of the heart, but continues the same it was in its origin, notwithstanding every degree of cordiality between the parties should be utterly extinguished; whereas the kind affections enter so essentially into the latter, that where love does not exist friendship can have no being. But what still further evinces the strength and efficacy of friendship above all the numberless other social tendencies of the human heart is that,

instead of wasting its force upon a multiplicity of divided objects, its whole energy is exerted for the benefit of only two or three persons at the utmost.

Friendship may be shortly defined, "a perfect conformity of opinions upon all religious and civil subjects, united with the highest degree of mutual esteem and affection"; and yet from these simple circumstances results the most desirable blessing (virtue alone excepted) that the gods have bestowed on mankind. I am sensible that in this opinion I shall not be universally supported—health and riches, honors and power, have each of them their distinct admirers, and are respectively pursued as the supreme felicity of human life; whilst some there are (and the number is by no means inconsiderable) who contend that it is to be found only in the sensual gratifications. But the latter place their principal happiness on the same low enjoyments which constitute the chief good of brutes, and the former on those very precarious possessions that depend much less on our own merit than on the caprice of fortune. They, indeed, who maintain that the ultimate good of man consists in the knowledge and practice of virtue, fix it, undoubtedly, upon its truest and most glorious foundation; but let it be remembered, at the same time, that virtue is at once both the parent and the support of friendship.

I have already declared that by virtue I do not mean, with the philosophers before alluded to, that ideal strain of perfection which is nowhere to be found but in the pompous language of enthusiastic declamation; I mean only that attainable degree of moral merit which is understood by the term in common discourse, and may be exemplified in actual practice. Without entering, therefore, into a particular inquiry concerning those imaginary beings which never have been realized in human nature, I think myself warranted in considering those persons as truly good men who have always been so deemed in the general opinion of mankind—the Pauli, for

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instance, and the Catos, the Galli, the Scipios, and the Philis; for with such characters the world has reason to be well contented.

When Friendship, therefore, is contracted between men who possess a degree of virtue not inferior to that which adorned those approved personages I have just named, it is productive of unspeakable advantages. "Life would be utterly lifeless," as old Ennius expresses it, without a friend on whose kindness and fidelity one might confidently repose. Can there be a more real complacency, indeed, than to lay open to another the most secret thoughts of one's heart with the same confidence and security as if they were still concealed in his own? Would not the fruits of prosperity lose much of their relish were there none who equally rejoiced with the possessor in the satisfaction he received from them? And how difficult must it prove to bear up under the pressure of misfortunes unsupported by a generous associate who more than equally divides their load? In short, the several occasions to which friendship extends its kindly offices are unbounded, while the advantage of every other object of human desires is confined within certain specific and determinate limits, beyond which it is of no avail. Thus wealth is pursued for the particular uses to which it is solely applicable; power, in order to receive worship; honors, for the sake of fame; sensual indulgences, on account of the gratifications that attend them; and health, as the means of living exempt from pain and possessing the unobstructed exercise of all our corporeal faculties. Whereas Friendship (I repeat again) is adapted by its nature to an infinite number of different ends, accommodates itself to all circumstances and situations of human life, and can at no season prove either unsuitable or inconvenient—in a word, not even fire and water (to use a proverbial illustration) are capable of being converted to a greater variety of beneficial purposes.

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I desire it may be understood, however, that I am now speaking, not of that inferior species of amity which occurs in the common intercourse of the world (although this, too, is not without its pleasures and advantages), but of that genuine and perfect friendship, examples of which are so extremely rare as to be rendered memorable by their singularity. It is this sort alone that can truly be said to heighten the joys of prosperity, and mitigate the sorrows of adversity, by a generous participation of both; indeed, one of the chief among the many important offices of this connection is exerted in the day of affliction, by dispelling the gloom that overcasts the mind, encouraging the hope of happier times, and preventing the depressed spirits from sinking into a state of weak and unmanly despondence. Whoever is in possession of a true friend sees the exact counterpart of his own soul. In consequence of this moral resemblance between them, they are so intimately one that no advantage can attend either which does not equally communicate itself to both; they are strong in the strength, rich in the opulence, and powerful in the power of each other. They can scarcely, indeed, be considered in any respect as separate individuals, and wherever the one appears the other is virtually present. I will venture even a bolder assertion, and affirm that in despite of death they must both continue to exist so long as either of them shall remain alive; for the deceased may, in a certain sense, be said still to live whose memory is preserved with the highest veneration and the most tender regret in the bosom of the survivor, a circumstance which renders the former happy in death, and the latter honored in life.

If that benevolent principle which thus intimately unites two persons in the bands of amity were to be struck out of the human heart, it would be impossible that either private families or public communities should subsist—even the land itself would lie waste, and desolation overspread the earth.

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Should this assertion stand in need of a proof, it will appear evident by considering the ruinous consequences which ensue from discord and dissension; for what family is so securely established, or what government fixed upon so firm a basis, that it would not be overturned and utterly destroyed were a general spirit of enmity and malevolence to break forth amongst its members?—a sufficient argument, surely, of the inestimable benefits which flow from the kind and friendly affections.

I have been informed that a certain learned bard of Agrigentum published a philosophic poem in Greek, in which he asserted that the several bodies which compose the physical system of the universe preserve the consistence of their respective forms, or are dispersed into their primitive atoms, as a principle of amity, or of discord, becomes predominant in their composition. It is certain, at least, that the powerful effect of these opposite agents in the moral world is universally perceived and acknowledged. Agreeable to this general sentiment, who is there, when he beholds a man generously exposing himself to certain danger, for the sake of rescuing his distressed friend, that can forbear expressing the warmest approbation? Accordingly, what repeated acclamations lately echoed through the theater at the new play of my host and friend Pacuvius, in that scene where Pylades and Orestes are introduced before the king; who being ignorant which of them was Orestes, whom he had determined to put to death, each insists, in order to save the life of his associate, that he himself is the real person in question. If the mere fictitious representation of such a magnanimous and heroic contention was thus universally applauded by the spectators, what impression must it have made upon their minds had they seen it actually displayed in real life! The general effect produced upon this occasion, clearly shows how deeply nature hath impressed on the human heart a sense of moral beauty;

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since a whole audience thus unanimously conspired in admiring an instance of sublime generosity in another's conduct, which not one of them, perhaps, was capable of exhibiting in his own.

Thus far I have ventured to lay before you my general notions concerning friendship. If aught remain to be added on the subject (and much there certainly does), permit me to refer you to those philosophers who are more capable of giving you satisfaction.

Fannius. That satisfaction, Lælius, we rather hope to receive from you. For although I have frequently applied to those philosophers to whom you would resign me, and have been no unwilling auditor of their discourses, yet I am persuaded you will deliver your sentiments upon this subject in a much more elegant and enlightening manner.

Scævola. You would have been still more confirmed in that opinion, Fannius, had you been present with us at the conference which we held not long since in the gardens of Scipio, upon the subject of government; when Lælius proved himself so powerful an advocate in support of natural justice, by confuting the subtle arguments of the very acute and distinguishing Philus.

Fannius. To triumph in the cause of justice could be no difficult task, certainly, to Lælius, who is, confessedly, one of the most just and upright of men.

Scævola. And can it be less easy for him who has deservedly acquired the highest honor by his eminent constancy, affection, and fidelity to his friend, to explain, with equal success, the principles and duties of friendship?

Lælius. This is pressing me beyond all power of resistance; and, indeed, it would be unreasonable, as well as difficult, not to yield to the desires of two such worthy relations, when they request my sentiments upon a point of so interesting and important a nature.

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Having frequently, then, turned my thoughts on this subject, the principal question that has always occurred to me is, whether Friendship takes its rise from the wants and weaknesses of man, and is cultivated solely in order to obtain, by a mutual exchange of good offices, those advantages which he could not otherwise acquire? Or whether nature, notwithstanding this beneficial intercourse is inseparable from the connection, previously disposes the heart to engage in it upon a nobler and more generous inducement? In order to determine this question, it must be observed that love is a leading and essential principle in constituting that particular species of benevolence which is termed amity; and although this sentiment may be feigned, indeed, by the followers of those who are courted merely with a view to interest, yet it cannot possibly be produced by a motive of interest alone. There is a truth and simplicity in genuine friendship, an unconstrained and spontaneous emotion, altogether incompatible with every kind and degree of artifice and simulation. I am persuaded, therefore, that it derives its origin not from the indigence of human nature, but from a distinct principle implanted in the breast of man; from a certain instinctive tendency, which draws congenial minds into union, and not from a cool calculation of the advantages with which it is pregnant.

The wonderful force, indeed, of innate propensities of the benevolent kind is observable even among brutes, in that tender attachment which prevails during a certain period between the dam and her young. But their strongest effects are more particularly conspicuous in the human species; as appears, in the first place, from that powerful endearment which subsists between parents and children, and which cannot be eradicated or counteracted without the most detestable impiety; and in the next, from those sentiments of secret approbation which arise on the very first interview with a man whose manners and temper seem to harmonize with our own, and

in whom we think we discover symptoms of an honest and virtuous mind. In reality, nothing is so beautiful as virtue; and nothing makes its way more directly to the heart: we feel a certain degree of affection even towards those meritorious persons whom we have never seen, and whose characters are known to us only from history. Where is the man that does not, even at this distance of time, find his heart glow with benevolence towards the memory of Fabricius or Curius, though he certainly never beheld their persons? On the contrary, who is there that feels not emotions of hatred and detestation when he reflects on the conduct of Tarquin, of Cassius, or of Mælius? Rome has twice contended for empire upon Italian ground, when she sent forth her armies to oppose the respective invasions of Pyrrhus and of Hannibal; and yet, with what different dispositions do we review the campaigns of those hostile chiefs! The generous spirit of the former very much softens our resentment towards him; while the cruelty of the latter must render his character the abhorrence of every Roman.

If the charms of virtue, then, are so captivating, as to inspire us with some degree of affection towards those approved persons whom we never saw; or, which is still more extraordinary, if they force us to admire them even in an enemy; what wonder is it that in those with whom we live and converse they should affect us in a still more irresistible manner? It must be acknowledged, however, that this first impression is considerably strengthened and improved, by a nearer intercourse, by subsequent good offices, and by a general indication of zeal for our service—causes which, when they operate with combined force, kindle in the heart the warmest and most generous amity. To suppose that all attachments of this sort spring solely from a sense of human imbecility,¹ and in order to supply that insufficiency we feel in ourselves, by the

¹ That is, of human weakness.

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assistance we hope to receive from others, is to degrade friendship to a most unworthy and ignoble origin. Indeed, if this supposition were true, they who find in themselves the greatest defects would be the most disposed and the best qualified to engage in this kind of connection, which is contrary to fact. For experience shows that the more a man looks for his happiness within himself, and the more firmly he stands supported by the consciousness of his own intrinsic merit, the more desirous he is to cultivate an intercourse of amity, and the better friend he certainly proves. In what respect, let me ask, had Scipio any occasion for my services? We neither of us, most assuredly, stood in need of the other's aid; but the singular virtues I admired in his character, together with the favorable opinion which in some measure, perhaps, he had conceived of mine, were the primary and prevailing motives of that affectionate attachment which was afterwards so considerably increased by the habitudes of intimate and unreserved converse. For although many and great advantages accrued to both from the alliance that was thus formed between us, yet sure I am that the hope of receiving those reciprocal benefits by no means entered into the original cause of our union. In fact, as generosity disdains to make a traffic of her favors; and a liberal mind confers obligations, not from the mean hope of a return, but solely from that satisfaction which nature has annexed to the exertion of benevolent actions, so I think it is evident that we are induced to form friendships, not from a mercenary contemplation of their utility, but from that pure disinterested complacency which results from the mere exercise of the affection itself.

That sect of philosophers who impute all human actions to the same motive which determines those of brutes, and refer both to one common principle of self-gratification, will be very far, I am sensible, from agreeing with me in the origin I have ascribed to friendship. And no wonder, for nothing

great and elevated can win the esteem and approbation of a set of men whose whole thoughts and pursuits are professedly directed to so base and ignoble an end.

I shall take no further notice, therefore, of their unworthy tenets, well convinced as I am that there is an implanted sense in man, by which nature allures his heart to the charms of virtue, in whomsoever her lovely form appears. And hence it is, that they who find in themselves a predilection for some particular object of moral approbation are induced to desire a nearer and more intimate communion with that person, in order to enjoy those pure and mental advantages which flow from an habitual and familiar intercourse with the good,—I will add, too, in order to feel the refined satisfaction of inspiring equal and reciprocal sentiments of affection, together with the generous pleasure of conferring acts of kindness without the least view of a return. A friendship placed upon this, its proper and natural basis, is not only productive of the most solid utility, but stands at the same time upon a firmer and more durable foundation than if it were raised upon a sense of human wants and weakness. For if interest were the true and only medium to cement this connection, it could hold no longer than while interest, which is always fluctuating and variable, should continue to be advanced by the same hand; whereas genuine friendship, being produced by the simple efficiency of nature's steady and immutable laws, resembles the source from whence it springs, and is forever permanent and unchangeable.

Montaigne

HAVING considered the proceedings of a painter that serves me, I had a mind to imitate his way. He chooses the fairest place and middle of any wall, or panel, wherein to draw a picture, which he finishes with his utmost care and art, and the vacuity about it he fills with grotesques, which are odd fantastic figures without any grace but what they derive from their variety and the extravagance of their shapes. And in truth, what are these things I scribble, other than grotesques and monstrous bodies, made of various parts, without any certain figure, or any other than accidental order, coherence, or proportion?

“A fair woman (in her upper form) terminates in a fish” (Horace).

In this second part I go hand in hand with my painter: but fall very short of him in the first and the better, my power of handling not being such that I dare to offer at a rich piece, finely polished, and set off according to art. I have therefore thought fit to borrow one of Estienne de la Boétie, and such a one as shall honor and adorn all the rest of my work—namely, a discourse that he called Voluntary Servitude;

¹ The text is—substantially—that of the version by Charles Cotton as revised by William Carew Hazlitt, edition of 1902. All omissions, within the limits of the part reprinted, are indicated in the text, those of less extent than a paragraph by three periods, those of a paragraph or more by a dotted line. Quotations from Latin authors are given in the translations supplied in the footnotes of the Hazlitt-Cotton *Montaigne*. Other footnotes or parts of footnotes taken from this work are followed by the name *Hazlitt*, in square brackets. Within the text, parentheses following a quotation inclose the name of the author cited, and square brackets inclose matter inserted by the present editors.

but, since, those who did not know him have properly enough called it "Le contr' Un."¹ He wrote in his youth² by way of essay, in honor of liberty against tyrants; and it has since run through the hands of men of great learning and judgment not without singular and merited commendation; for it is finely written, and as full as anything can possibly be. And yet one may confidently say it is far short of what he was able to do; and if in that more mature age, wherein I had the happiness to know him, he had taken a design like this of mine, to commit his thoughts to writing, we should have seen a great many rare things, and such as would have gone very near to have rivaled the best writings of antiquity: for in natural parts especially, I know no man comparable to him. But he has left nothing behind him, save this treatise only (and that too by chance, for I believe he never saw it after it first went out of his hands), and some observations upon that edict of January,³ made famous by our civil wars, which also shall elsewhere, peradventure, find a place. These were all I could recover of his remains, I to whom with so affectionate a remembrance, upon his death-bed, he by his last will bequeathed his library and papers, the little book of his works only excepted, which I committed to the press. And this particular obligation I have to this treatise of his, that it was the occasion of my first coming acquainted with him; for it was showed to me long before I had the good fortune to know him, and gave me the first knowledge of his name, proving the first cause and foundation of a friendship which we afterwards improved and maintained, so long as God was pleased to continue us together, so perfect, inviolate, and entire, that certainly the like is hardly to be found in story, and amongst the men of this age there is no sign nor trace of any such thing in

¹ Signifying, apparently, "Against Autocracy."

² "Not being as yet eighteen years old."—Edition of 1588. [Hazlitt.]

³ 1562, which granted to the Huguenots the public exercise of their religion. [Hazlitt.]

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use; so much concurrence is required to the building of such a one that 'tis much if fortune bring it but once to pass in three ages.

There is nothing to which nature seems so much to have inclined us as to society; and Aristotle says that the good legislators had more respect to friendship than to justice. Now the most supreme point of its perfection is this [that is, a relationship having its origin in a purely social instinct]: for, generally, all those that pleasure, profit, public or private interest create and nourish, are so much the less beautiful and generous, and so much the less friendships, by how much they mix another cause, and design, and fruit in friendship, than itself. . . .

That [the friendship] of children to parents is rather respect: friendship is nourished by communication, which cannot by reason of the great disparity be betwixt these, but would rather perhaps offend the duties of nature; for neither are all the secret thoughts of fathers fit to be communicated to children, lest it beget an indecent familiarity betwixt them; nor can the advices and reproofs, [the administering of] which is one of the principal offices of friendship, be properly performed by the son to the father. There are some countries where 'twas the custom for children to kill their fathers, and others where the fathers killed their children. to avoid their being an impediment one to another in life; and naturally the expectations of the one depend upon the ruin of the other. There have been great philosophers who have made nothing of this tie of nature . . . [The] name of brother does indeed carry with it a fine and delectable sound, and for that reason, he [Estienne de la Boétie] and I called one another brothers: but the complication of interests, the division of estates, and that the wealth of the one should be the poverty of the other, strangely relax and weaken the fraternal tie: brothers pursuing their fortune and advancement by the same path,

'tis hardly possible but they must of necessity often jostle and hinder one another. Besides, why is it necessary that the correspondence of manners, parts, and inclinations, which begets the true and perfect friendships, should always meet in these relations? The father and the son may be of quite contrary humors, and so of brothers: he is my son, he is my brother; but he is passionate, ill-natured, or a fool. And moreover, by how much these are friendships that the law and natural obligation impose upon us, so much less is there of our own choice and voluntary freedom; whereas that voluntary liberty of ours has no production more promptly and properly its own than affection and friendship. Not that I have not in my own person experimented all that can possibly be expected of that kind, having had the best and most indulgent father, even to his extreme old age, that ever was, and who was himself descended from a family for many generations famous and exemplary for brotherly concord:—

“And I myself known to have a paternal love
toward my brothers” (Horace).

We are not here to bring the love we bear to women, though it be an act of our own choice, into comparison, nor rank it with the others. The fire of this, I confess—

“Nor is the goddess unknown to me who mixes
a sweet bitterness with my love” (Catullus)—

is more active, more eager, and more sharp: but withal, 'tis more precipitant, fickle, moving, and inconstant: a fever subject to intermissions and paroxysms, that has seized but on one part of us. Whereas in friendship 'tis a general and universal fire, but temperate and equal, a constant established heat, all gentle and smooth, without poignancy or roughness. Moreover, in love, 'tis no other than frantic desire for that which flies from us:—

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“As the hunter pursues the hare, in cold and heat, to the mountain, to the shore, nor cares for it farther when he sees it taken, and only delights in chasing that which flees from him” (Ariosto);—

so soon as it enters into the terms of friendship, that is to say, into a concurrence of desires, it vanishes and is gone; fruition destroys it, as having only a fleshly end, and such a one as is subject to satiety. Friendship, on the contrary, is enjoyed proportionably as it is desired; and only grows up, is nourished and improved by enjoyment, as being of itself spiritual, and the soul growing still more refined by practice. Under [that is, in subordination to] this perfect friendship, the other fleeting affections have in my younger years found some place in me, to say nothing of him, who himself so confesses but too much in his verses; so that I had both these passions, but always so that I could myself well enough distinguish them and never in any degree of comparison with one another; the first maintaining its flight in so lofty and so brave a place as with disdain to look down and see the other flying at a far humbler pitch below.

As concerning marriage,—besides that it is a covenant the entrance into which only is free, but the continuance in it forced and compulsory, having another dependence than that of our own free will, and [that it is] a bargain commonly contracted to other ends,—there almost always happen a thousand intricacies in it to unravel, enough to break the thread and to divert the current of a lively affection: whereas friendship has no manner of business or traffic with aught but itself. Moreover, to say truth, the ordinary talent of women is not such as is sufficient to maintain the conference and communication required to the support of this sacred tie; nor do they appear to be endued with constancy of mind to sustain the pinch of so hard and durable a knot. And doubtless if without this [deficiency] there could be such a free and voluntary famil-

ilarity contracted, where not only the souls might have this entire fruition, but the bodies also might share in the alliance, and a man be engaged throughout, the friendship would certainly be more full and perfect; but it is without example that this sex has ever yet arrived at such perfection; and, by the common consent of the ancient schools, it is wholly rejected from it.¹

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“Those are only to be reputed friendships that are fortified and confirmed by judgment and length of time” (Cicero).

For the rest, what we commonly call friends and friendships, are nothing but acquaintance and familiarities, either occasionally contracted, or upon some design, by means of which there happens some little intercourse betwixt our souls. But in the friendship I speak of, they mix and work themselves into one piece, with so universal a mixture, that there is no more sign of the seam by which they were first conjoined. If a man should importune me to give a reason why I loved him [Estienne de la Boétie], I find it could no otherwise be expressed, than by making answer: because it was he, because it was I. There is, beyond all that I am able to say, I know not what inexplicable and fated power that brought on this union. We sought one another long before we met, and by the characters we heard of one another, which wrought upon our affections more than, in reason, mere reports should do; I think 'twas by some secret appointment of heaven. We embraced in our names; and at our first meeting, which was accidentally at a great city entertainment, we found ourselves so mutually taken with one another, so acquainted, and so endeared betwixt ourselves, that from thenceforward nothing was so

¹ For another conception of love between the sexes—less foreign, perhaps, to modern sentiment—see Emerson's essay on the subject, below, p. 175.

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near to us as one another. He wrote an excellent Latin satire, since printed, wherein he excuses the precipitation of our intelligence, so suddenly come to perfection, saying, that destined to have so short a continuance, as begun so late (for we were both full-grown men, and he some years the older), there was no time to lose, nor were we tied to conform to the example of those slow and regular friendships that require so many precautions of long preliminary conversation. This has no other idea than that of itself, and can only refer to itself: this is no one special consideration, nor two, nor three, nor four, nor a thousand; 'tis I know not what quintessence of all this mixture, which, seizing my whole will, carried it to plunge and lose itself in his, and that, having seized his whole will, brought it back with equal concurrence and appetite to plunge and lose itself in mine. I may truly say *lose*, reserving nothing to ourselves that was either his or mine.

When Lælius, in the presence of the Roman consuls, who after they had sentenced Tiberius Gracchus prosecuted all those who had had any familiarity with him also, came to ask Caius Blossius, who was his chiefest friend, how much he would have done for him, and that he made answer: "All things,"—"How! All things!" said Lælius. "And what if he had commanded you to fire our temples?" "He would never have commanded me that," replied Blossius. "But what if he had?" said Lælius. "I would have obeyed him," said the other. If he was so perfect a friend to Gracchus as the histories report him to have been, there was yet no necessity of offending the consuls by such a bold confession, though he might still have retained the assurance he had of Gracchus' disposition. However, those who accuse this answer as seditious, do not well understand the mystery; nor presuppose, as it was true, that he had Gracchus' will in his sleeve, both by the power of a friend, and the perfect knowledge he had of the man: they were more friends than citizens, more friends to one another than

either enemies or friends to their country, or than friends to ambition and innovation; having absolutely given up themselves to one another, either held absolutely the reins of the other's inclination; and suppose all this guided by virtue, and all this by the conduct of reason, which also without these it had not been possible to do, Blossius' answer was such as it ought to be. If any of their actions flew out of the handle, they were neither (according to my measure of friendship) friends to one another, nor to themselves. As to the rest, this answer carries no worse sound than mine would do to one that should ask me: "If your will should command you to kill your daughter, would you do it?" and that I should make answer, that I would; for this expresses no consent to such an act, forasmuch as I do not in the least suspect my own will, and as little that of such a friend. 'Tis not in the power of all the eloquence in the world to dispossess me of the certainty I have of the intentions and resolutions of my friend; nay, no one action of his, what face soever it might bear, could be presented to me, of which I could not presently, and at first sight, find out the moving cause. Our souls had drawn so unanimously together, they had considered each other with so ardent an affection, and with the like affection laid open the very bottom of our hearts to one another's view, that I not only knew his as well as my own, but should certainly in any concern of mine have trusted my interest much more willingly with him, than with myself.

Let no one, therefore, rank other common friendships with such a one as this. I have had as much experience of these as another, and of the most perfect of their kind: but I do not advise that any should confound the rules of the one and the other, for they would find themselves much deceived. In those other ordinary friendships you are to walk with bridle in your hand, with prudence and circumspection, for in them the knot is not so sure that a man may not half suspect it will slip. "Love him," said Chilo, "so as if you were one day to hate

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him; and hate him so as you were one day to love him." This precept, though abominable in the sovereign and perfect friendship I speak of, is nevertheless very sound as to the practice of the ordinary and customary ones, and to which the saying that Aristotle had so frequent in his mouth, "O my friends, there is no friend," may very fitly be applied. In this noble commerce, good offices, presents, and benefits, by which other friendships are supported and maintained, do not deserve so much as to be mentioned; and the reason is the concurrence of our wills; for, as the kindness I have for myself receives no increase, for anything I relieve myself withal in time of need (whatever the Stoics say), and as I do not find myself obliged to myself for any service I do myself: so the union of such friends, being truly perfect, deprives them of all idea of such duties, and makes them loathe and banish from their conversation these words of division and distinction,—*benefits, obligation, acknowledgment, entreaty, thanks*, and the like. All things, wills, thoughts, opinions, goods, wives, children, honors, and lives, being in effect common betwixt them, and that absolute concurrence of affections being no other than one soul in two bodies (according to that very proper definition of Aristotle), they can neither lend nor give anything to one another. This is the reason why the lawgivers, to honor marriage with some resemblance of this divine alliance, interdict all gifts betwixt man and wife; inferring by that, that all should belong to each of them, and that they have nothing to divide or to give to each other.

If, in the friendship of which I speak, one could give to the other, the receiver of the benefit would be the man that obliged his friend; for each of them contending and above all things studying how to be useful to the other, he that administers the occasion is the liberal man, in giving his friend the satisfaction of doing that towards him which above all things he most desires. When the philosopher Diogenes wanted money, he

used to say that he redemanded it of his friends, not that he demanded it. And to let you see the practical working of this I will here produce an ancient and singular example. Eudamidas, a Corinthian, had two friends, Charixenus a Sicyonian and Areteus a Corinthian; this man coming to die, being poor, and his two friends rich, he made his will after this manner:—"I bequeath to Areteus the maintenance of my mother, to support and provide for her in her old age; and to Charixenus I bequeath the care of marrying my daughter, and to give her as good a portion as he is able; and in case one of these chance to die, I hereby substitute the survivor in his place." They who first saw this will made themselves very merry at the contents: but the legatees, being made acquainted with it, accepted it with very great content; and one of them, Charixenus, dying within five days after, and by that means the charge of both duties devolving solely on him, Areteus nurtured the old woman with very great care and tenderness, and of five talents he had in estate he gave two and a half in marriage with an only daughter he had of his own, and two and a half in marriage with the daughter of Eudamidas, and on one and the same day solemnized both their nuptials.

This example is very full [of significance as an illustration of friendship], if one thing were not to be objected, namely, the multitude of friends: for the perfect friendship I speak of is indivisible; each one gives himself so entirely to his friend that he has nothing left to distribute to others: on the contrary, is sorry that he is not double, treble, or quadruple, and that he has not many souls and many wills, to confer them all upon this one object. Common friendships will admit of division; one may love the beauty of this person, the good-humor of that, the liberality of a third, the paternal affection of a fourth, the fraternal love of a fifth, and so of the rest: but this friendship that possesses the whole soul, and there rules and sways with an absolute sovereignty, cannot possibly admit of a rival. If two

at the same time should call to you for succor, to which of them would you run? Should they require of you contrary offices, how could you serve them both? Should one commit a thing to your silence that it were of importance to the other to know, how would you disengage yourself? A unique and particular friendship dissolves all other obligations whatsoever: the secret I have sworn not to reveal to any other, I may without perjury communicate to him who is not another, but myself. 'Tis miracle enough certainly for a man to double himself, and those that talk of tripling, talk they know not of what. Nothing is extreme that has its like; and he who shall suppose that of two I love one as much as the other, that they mutually love one another too, and love me as much as I love them, multiplies into a confraternity the most single of units, and whereof, moreover, one alone is the hardest thing in the world to find. The rest of this story suits very well with what I was saying; for Eudamidas, as a bounty and favor, bequeaths to his friends a legacy of employing themselves in his necessity; he leaves them heirs to this liberality of his, which consists in giving them the opportunity of conferring a benefit upon him; and doubtless the force of friendship is more eminently apparent in this act of his than in that of Areteus. In short, these are effects not to be imagined nor comprehended by such as have not experience of them, and which make me infinitely honor and admire the answer of that young soldier to Cyrus, by whom being asked how much he would take for a horse with which he had won the prize of a race, and whether he would exchange him for a kingdom? "No, truly, sir," said he, "but I would give him with all my heart to get thereby a true friend, could I find out any man worthy of that alliance."¹ He did not say ill in saying, "could I find": for though one may almost everywhere meet with men sufficiently qualified for a superficial ac-

¹ When some one told Cowper, the poet, that he was going to see a friend, "A friend!" he returned; "let me go with you." [Hazlitt.]

quaintance, yet in this, where a man is to deal from the very bottom of his heart, without any manner of reservation, it will be requisite that all the wards and springs be truly wrought and perfectly sure.

For table-talk, I prefer the pleasant and witty before the learned and the grave; . . . in common discourse the ablest speaker, whether or no there be sincerity in the case. And, as he that was found astride upon a hobby-horse playing with his children entreated the person who had surprised him in that posture to say nothing of it till himself came to be a father, supposing that the fondness that would then possess his own soul would render him a fairer judge of such an action; so I, also, could wish to speak to such as have had experience of what I say: though, knowing how remote a thing such a friendship is from the common practice, and how rarely it is to be found, I despair of meeting with any such judge. For even these discourses left us by antiquity upon this subject seem to me flat and poor in comparison of the sense I have of it, and in this particular [that is, in my experience of friendship] the effects surpass even the precepts of philosophy:—

“While I have sense left to me, there will never be anything more acceptable to me than an agreeable friend” (Horace).

The ancient Menander declared him to be happy that had had the good fortune to meet with but the shadow of a friend: and doubtless he had good reason to say so, especially if he spoke by experience: for in good earnest, if I compare all the rest of my life, though, thanks be to God, I have passed my time pleasantly enough, and at my ease, and, the loss of such a friend excepted, free from any grievous affliction,¹ and in great tranquillity of mind, having been contented with my natural and original commodities, without being solicitous after

¹ Montaigne says elsewhere that he had lost “two or three children.”

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others;—if I should compare it all, I say, with the four years I had the happiness to enjoy the sweet society of this excellent man, 'tis nothing but smoke, an obscure and tedious night. From the day that I lost him—

“A day to me forever sad, forever sacred, so have you willed, ye gods” (Virgil)—

I have only led a languishing life; and the very pleasures that present themselves to me, instead of administering anything of consolation, double my affliction for his loss. We were halves throughout, and to that degree that methinks by outliving him I defraud him of his part:—

“I have prescribed to myself that it is not rightful to enjoy any pleasure, so long as he, my partner in such great ones, is away” (Terence).

I was so grown and accustomed to be always his double in all places and in all things that methinks I am no more than half of myself:—

“If a superior force has taken that part of my soul, why do I, the remaining one, linger behind? What is left is not so dear, nor an entire thing: this day has wrought the destruction of both” (Horace).

There is no action or imagination of mine wherein I do not miss him; as I know that he would have missed me: for as he surpassed me by infinite degrees in virtue and all other accomplishments, so he also did in the duties of friendship:—

“What shame can there be, or measure, in lamenting so dear a friend?” (Horace).

“O brother, taken from me miserable! With thee all our joys have vanished, those joys which, in thy life, thy dear love nourished. Dying, thou, my brother, hast destroyed all my happiness. My whole soul is buried with thee. Thou dead, I have bidden adieu to the muses, to all the studies which charmed my mind. No more can I speak to thee; no more hear thy voice. Never again shall I see thee, O brother dearer to me than life. Naught remains, but that I love thee while life shall endure” (Catullus).

Francis Bacon

IT had been hard for him that spake it to have put more truth and untruth together, in few words, than in that speech: *Whosoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a god.* For it is most true that a natural and secret hatred and aversion towards society in any man hath somewhat of the savage beast; but it is most untrue that it should have any character at all of the Divine Nature; except it proceed, not out of a pleasure in solitude, but out of a love and desire to sequester a man's self for a higher conversation: such as is found to have been falsely and feignedly in some of the heathen, as Epimenides the Candian, Numa the Roman, Empedocles the Sicilian, and Apollonius of Tyana; and truly and really in divers of the ancient hermits and holy fathers of the church. But little do men perceive what solitude is, and how far it extendeth. For a crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love. The Latin adage meeteth with it a little: *Magna civitas, magna solitudo*,² because in a great town friends are scattered, so that there is not that fellowship, for the most part, which is in less neighborhoods. But we may go further and affirm most truly that it is a mere and miserable solitude to want true friends, without which the world is but a wilderness; and even in this sense also of solitude, whosoever in the frame of his nature and affections is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast, and not from humanity.

A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of

¹ The text is that of the third edition of the *Essays*, considerably modified.

² Where the inhabitants are many, great is the solitude.

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the fullness and swellings of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce. We know diseases of stoppings and suffocations are the most dangerous in the body; and it is not much otherwise in the mind: you may take sarza to open the liver; steel to open the spleen; flowers of sulphur for the lungs; castoreum for the brain; but no receipt openeth the heart but a true friend, to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession.

It is a strange thing to observe how high a rate great kings and monarchs do set upon this fruit of friendship whereof we speak, so great as they purchase it many times at the hazard of their own safety and greatness. For princes in regard of the distance of their fortune from that of their subjects and servants, cannot gather this fruit, except (to make themselves capable thereof) they raise some persons to be as it were companions and almost equals to themselves, which many times sorteth to inconvenience. The modern languages give unto such persons the name of *favorites*, or *privados*,¹ as if it were matter of grace or conversation. But the Roman name attaineth the true use and cause thereof, naming them *participes curarum*,² for it is that which tieth the knot. And we see plainly that this hath been done, not by weak and passionate princes only, but by the wisest and most politic that ever reigned, who have oftentimes joined to themselves some of their servants, whom both themselves have called friends and allowed others likewise to call them in the same manner, using the word which is received between private men.

L. Sylla, when he commanded Rome, raised Pompey (after surnamed the Great) to that height that Pompey vaunted himself for Sylla's overmatch. For when he had carried the consulship for a friend of his, against the pursuit of Sylla, and

¹ Spanish for *favorites* or *court minions*.

² Partners in care.

that Sylla did a little resent thereat, and began to speak great, Pompey turned upon him again and in effect bade him be quiet, *for that more men adored the sun rising than the sun setting*. With Julius Cæsar, Decimus Brutus had obtained that interest as he set him down in his testament for heir in remainder, after his nephew. And this was the man that had power with him to draw him forth to his death. For when Cæsar would have discharged the Senate, in regard of some ill presages, and specially a dream of Calpurnia, this man lifted him gently by the arm, out of his chair, telling him he hoped he would not dismiss the Senate till his wife had dreamt a better dream.¹ And it seemeth his favor was so great as Antonius in a letter, which is recited verbatim in one of Cicero's *Philippics*, calleth him *venefica* (witch), as if he had enchanted Cæsar. Augustus raised Agrippa (though of mean birth) to that height as when he consulted with Mæcenus about the marriage of his daughter Julia, Mæcenus took the liberty to tell him that he must either marry his daughter to Agrippa or take away his life, there was no third way, he had made him so great. With Tiberius Cæsar, Sejanus had ascended to that height as they two were termed and reckoned as a pair of friends. Tiberius in a letter to him saith: *Haec pro amicitia nostra non occultavi*;² and the whole Senate dedicated an altar to friendship as to a goddess, in respect of the great dearness of friendship between them two. The like or more was between Septimius Severus and Plautianus. For he forced his eldest son to marry the daughter of Plautianus, and would often maintain Plautianus in doing affronts to his son, and did write also in a letter to the Senate, by these words: *I love the man so well as I wish he may over-live me*. Now if these princes had been as a Trajan, or a Marcus Aurelius, a man might have thought that this had proceeded of an abundant goodness of nature; but being men so wise, of such strength

¹ Would not, that is, refuse to convene the Senate till his wife had dreamt a better dream.

² These things, because of our friendship, I have not concealed.

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and severity of mind, and so extreme lovers of themselves as all these were, it proveth most plainly that they found their own felicity (though as great as ever happened to mortal men) but as an half piece, except they might have a friend to make it entire; and yet, which is more, they were princes that had wives, sons, nephews, and yet all these could not supply the comfort of friendship.

It is not to be forgotten, what Commineus¹ observeth of his first master, Duke Charles the Hardy, namely, that he would communicate his secrets with none; and least of all those secrets which troubled him most. Whereupon he goeth on and saith that towards his latter time that closeness did impair and a little perish² his understanding. Surely Commineus might have made the same judgment also, if it had pleased him, of his second master, Lewis the Eleventh, whose closeness was indeed his tormentor. The parable of Pythagoras is dark, but true: *Cor ne edito* (Eat not the heart). Certainly, if a man would give it a hard phrase, those that want friends to open themselves unto are cannibals of their own hearts. But one thing is most admirable (wherewith I will conclude this first fruit of friendship), which is that this communicating of a man's self to his friend works two contrary effects; for it redoubleth joys, and cutteth griefs in halves. For there is no man that imparteth his joys to his friend but he joyeth the more, and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend but he grieveth the less. So that it is, in truth of operation upon a man's mind, of like virtue as the alchemists use to attribute to their stone, for man's body: that it worketh all contrary effects, but still to the good and benefit of nature. But yet, without praying in aid of alchemists,³ there is a manifest image of this in the ordinary course of nature. For in bodies union strengtheneth and cher-

¹ A Latinized form of *Commynes*.

² That is, cause to perish.

³ That is, without resorting to alchemists for a comparison.

isheth any natural action: and, on the other side, weakeneth and dulleth any violent impression: and even so is it of minds.

The second fruit of friendship is healthful and sovereign for the understanding, as the first is for the affections. For friendship maketh indeed a fair day in the affections, from storm and tempests: but it maketh daylight in the understanding, out of darkness and confusion of thoughts. Neither is this to be understood only of faithful counsel which a man receiveth from his friend; but before you come to that, certain it is that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up in the communicating and discoursing with another: he tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshaleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words; finally, he waxeth wiser than himself; and that more by an hour's discourse, than by a day's meditation. It was well said by Themistocles to the king of Persia, that speech was like cloth of Arras, opened, and put abroad, whereby the imagery doth appear in figure; whereas in thoughts they lie but as in packs. Neither is this second fruit of friendship, in opening the understanding, restrained only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel (they indeed are best); but even without that, a man learneth of himself, and bringeth his own thoughts to light, and whetteth his wits as against a stone, which itself cuts not. In a word, a man were better to relate himself to a statue, or picture, than to suffer his thoughts to pass in smother.

Add now, to make this second fruit of friendship complete, that other point, which lieth more open and falleth within vulgar observation—which is faithful counsel from a friend. Heraclitus saith well, in one of his enigmas: *Dry light is ever the best*. And certain it is that the light that a man receiveth by counsel from another, is drier, and purer, than that which cometh from his own understanding and judgment, which is ever infused and drenched in his affections and customs. So

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as, there is as much difference between the counsel that a friend giveth, and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the counsel of a friend, and of a flatterer. For there is no such flatterer as is a man's self; and there is no such remedy against flattery of a man's self as the liberty of a friend. Counsel is of two sorts: the one concerning manners,¹ the other concerning business. For the first: the best preservative to keep the mind in health is the faithful admonition of a friend. The calling of a man's self to a strict account is a medicine, sometime, too piercing and corrosive. Reading good books of morality is a little flat and dead. Observing our faults in others is sometimes improper for our case. But the best receipt (best, I say, to work, and best to take) is the admonition of a friend. It is a strange thing to behold, what gross errors, and extreme absurdities, many (especially of the greater sort) do commit, for want of a friend to tell them of them; to the great damage, both of their fame and fortune. For, as St. James saith, they are as men that look sometimes into a glass and presently forget their own shape and favor. As for business: a man may think, if he will, that two eyes see no more than one; or that a gamester seeth always more than a looker on; or that a man in anger is as wise as he that hath said over the four and twenty letters; or that a musket may be shot off as well upon the arm as upon a rest; and such other fond and high imaginations, to think himself all in all. But when all is done, the help of good counsel is that which setteth business straight. And if any man think that he will take counsel, but it shall be by pieces; asking counsel in one business of one man, and in another business of another man; it is well (that is to say, better perhaps than if he asked none at all); but he runneth two dangers: one, that he shall not be faithfully counseled; for it is a rare thing, except it be from a perfect and entire friend, to have counsel given but such as shall be bowed and crooked to

¹ That is, conduct.

some ends which he hath that giveth it. The other, that he shall have counsel given, hurtful, and unsafe (though with good meaning), and mixed, partly of mischief and partly of remedy: even as if you would call a physician that is thought good for the cure of the disease you complain of, but is unacquainted with your body; and therefore may put you in way for a present cure, but overthroweth your health in some other kind; and so cure the disease, and kill the patient. But a friend, that is wholly acquainted with a man's estate, will beware by furthering any present business how he dasheth upon other inconvenience. And therefore rest not upon scattered counsels; they will rather distract and mislead, than settle and direct.

And these two noble fruits of friendship (peace in the affections, and support of the judgment) followeth the last fruit, which is like the pomegranate, full of many kernels; I mean aid, and bearing a part, in all actions and occasions. Here, the best way to represent to life the manifold use of friendship is to cast and see how many things there are which a man cannot do himself; and then it will appear that it was a sparing speech of the ancients to say that a friend is another himself, for that a friend is far more than himself. Men have their time, and die many times in desire of some things which they principally take to heart: the bestowing of a child, the finishing of a work, or the like. If a man have a true friend, he may rest almost secure that the care of those things will continue after him. So that a man hath as it were two lives in his desires. A man hath a body, and that body is confined to a place; but where friendship is, all offices of life are as it were granted to him and his deputy. For he may exercise them by his friend. How many things are there which a man cannot, with any face or comeliness, say or do himself? A man can scarce allege his own merits with modesty, much less extol them; a man cannot sometimes brook to supplicate or beg; and a number of the like.

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But all these things are graceful in a friend's mouth, which are blushing in a man's own. So again, a man's person hath many proper relations which he cannot put off. A man cannot speak to his son, but as a father; to his wife, but as a husband; to his enemy, but upon terms: whereas a friend may speak as the case requires, and not as it sorteth with the person. But to enumerate these things were endless: I have given the rule where a man cannot fitly play his own part: if he have not a friend, he may quit the stage.

Robert Louis Stevenson

"Rhodope. But Æsop, you should never say the thing that is untrue.

"Æsop. We say and do and look no other all our lives."

—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

AMONG sayings that have a currency in spite of being wholly false upon the face of them, for the sake of a half-truth upon another subject which is accidentally combined with the error, one of the grossest and broadest conveys the monstrous proposition that it is easy to tell the truth and hard to tell a lie. I wish heartily it were. But the truth is one; it has first to be discovered, then justly and exactly uttered. Even with instruments specially contrived for such a purpose—with a foot rule, a level, or a theodolite—it is not easy to be exact; it is easier, alas! to be inexact. From those who mark the divisions on a scale to those who measure the boundaries of empires or the distance of the heavenly stars, it is by careful method and minute, unwearying attention that men rise even to material exactness or to sure knowledge even of external and constant things. But it is easier to draw the outline of a mountain than the changing appearance of a face; and truth in human relations is of this more intangible and dubious order: hard to seize, harder to communicate. Veracity to facts in a loose, colloquial sense—not to say that I have been in Malabar when as a matter of fact I was never out of England, not to say that I have read Cervantes in the original

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when as a matter of fact I know not one syllable of Spanish—this, indeed, is easy and to the same degree unimportant in itself. Lies of this sort, according to circumstances, may or may not be important; in a certain sense even they may or may not be false. The habitual liar may be a very honest fellow, and live truly with his wife and friends; while another man who never told a formal falsehood in his life may yet be himself one lie—heart and face, from top to bottom. This is the kind of lie which poisons intimacy. And, *vice versa*, veracity to sentiment, truth in a relation, truth to your own heart and your friends, never to feign or falsify emotion—that is the truth which makes love possible and mankind happy.

*L'art de bien dire*¹ is but a drawing-room accomplishment unless it be pressed into the service of the truth. The difficulty of literature is not to write, but to write what you mean; not to affect your reader, but to affect him precisely as you wish. This is commonly understood in the case of books or set orations; even in making your will, or writing an explicit letter, some difficulty is admitted by the world. But one thing you can never make Philistine natures understand; one thing, which yet lies on the surface, remains as unseizable to their wits as a high flight of metaphysics—namely, that the business of life is mainly carried on by means of this difficult art of literature, and according to a man's proficiency in that art shall be the freedom and the fullness of his intercourse with other men. Anybody, it is supposed, can say what he means; and, in spite of their notorious experience to the contrary, people so continue to suppose. Now, I simply open the last book I have been reading—Mr. Leland's captivating *English Gipsies*. "It is said," I find on p. 7, "that those who can converse with Irish peasants in their own native tongue form far higher opinions of their appreciation of the beautiful, and of *the elements of humor and pathos in their hearts*, than do those who know

¹ The art of speaking well.

their thoughts only through the medium of English. I know from my own observations that this is quite the case with the Indians of North America, and it is unquestionably so with the gipsy." In short, where a man has not a full possession of the language, the most important, because the most amiable, qualities of his nature have to lie buried and fallow; for the pleasure of comradeship, and the intellectual part of love, rest upon these very "elements of humor and pathos." Here is a man opulent in both, and for lack of a medium he can put none of it out to interest in the market of affection! But what is thus made plain to our apprehensions in the case of a foreign language is partially true even with the tongue we learned in childhood. Indeed, we all speak different dialects; one shall be copious and exact, another loose and meager; but the speech of the ideal talker shall correspond and fit upon the truth of fact—not clumsily, obscuring lineaments, like a mantle, but cleanly adhering, like an athlete's skin. And what is the result? That the one can open himself more clearly to his friends, and can enjoy more of what makes life truly valuable—intimacy with those he loves. An orator makes a false step; he employs some trivial, some absurd, some vulgar phrase; in the turn of a sentence he insults, by a side wind, those whom he is laboring to charm; in speaking to one sentiment he unconsciously ruffles another in parenthesis; and you are not surprised, for you know his task to be delicate and filled with perils. "O frivolous mind of man, light ignorance!" As if yourself, when you seek to explain some misunderstanding or excuse some apparent fault, speaking swiftly and addressing a mind still recently incensed, were not harnessing for a more perilous adventure; as if yourself required less tact and eloquence; as if an angry friend or a suspicious lover were not more easy to offend than a meeting of indifferent politicians! Nay, and the orator treads in a beaten round; the matters he discusses have been discussed a thousand times before; language

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is ready-shaped to his purpose; he speaks out of a cut and dry vocabulary. But you—may it not be that your defense reposes on some subtlety of feeling, not so much as touched upon in Shakespeare, to express which, like a pioneer, you must venture forth into zones of thought still unsurveyed, and become yourself a literary innovator? For even in love there are unlovely humors; ambiguous acts, unpardonable words, may yet have sprung from a kind sentiment. If the injured one could read your heart, you may be sure that he would understand and pardon; but, alas! the heart cannot be shown—it has to be demonstrated in words. Do you think it is a hard thing to write poetry? Why, that is to write poetry, and of a high, if not the highest, order.

I should even more admire "the lifelong and heroic literary labors" of my fellow-men, patiently clearing up in words their loves and their contentions, and speaking their autobiography daily to their wives, were it not for a circumstance which lessens their difficulty and my admiration by equal parts. For life, though largely, is not entirely carried on by literature. We are subject to physical passions and contortions; the voice breaks and changes, and speaks by unconscious and winning inflections; we have legible countenances, like an open book; things that cannot be said look eloquently through the eyes; and the soul, not locked into the body as a dungeon, dwells ever on the threshold with appealing signals. Groans and tears, looks and gestures, a flush or a paleness, are often the most clear reporters of the heart, and speak more directly to the hearts of others. The message flies by these interpreters in the least space of time, and the misunderstanding is averted in the moment of its birth. To explain in words takes time and a just and patient hearing; and in the critical epochs of a close relation, patience and justice are not qualities on which we can rely. But the look or the gesture explains things in a breath; they tell their message without ambiguity; unlike speech, they cannot stumble, by

the way, on a reproach or an illusion that should steel your friend against the truth; and then they have a higher authority, for they are the direct expression of the heart, not yet transmitted through the unfaithful and sophisticating brain. Not long ago I wrote a letter to a friend which came near involving us in quarrel; but we met, and in personal talk I repeated the worst of what I had written, and added worse to that; and with the commentary of the body it seemed not unfriendly either to hear or say. Indeed, letters are in vain for the purposes of intimacy; an absence is a dead break in the relation; yet two who know each other fully and are bent on perpetuity in love, may so preserve the attitude of their affections that they may meet on the same terms as they had parted.

Pitiful is the case of the blind, who cannot read the face; pitiful that of the deaf, who cannot follow the changes of the voice. And there are others also to be pitied; for there are some of an inert, uneloquent nature, who have been denied all the symbols of communication, who have neither a lively play of facial expression, nor speaking gestures, nor a responsive voice, nor yet the gift of frank, explanatory speech: people truly made of clay, people tied for life into a bag which no one can undo. They are poorer than the gipsy, for their heart can speak no language under heaven. Such people we must learn slowly by the tenor of their acts, or through yea and nay communications; or we take them on trust on the strength of a general air, and now and again, when we see the spirit breaking through in a flash, correct or change our estimate. But these will be uphill intimacies, without charm or freedom, to the end; and freedom is the chief ingredient in confidence. Some minds, romantically dull, despise physical endowments. That is a doctrine for a misanthrope; to those who like their fellow-creatures it must always be meaningless; and, for my part, I can see few things more desirable, after the possession

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of such radical qualities as honor and humor and pathos, than to have a lively and not a stolid countenance; to have looks to correspond with every feeling; to be elegant and delightful in person, so that we shall please even in the intervals of active pleasing, and may never discredit speech with uncouth manners or become unconsciously our own burlesques. But of all unfortunates there is one creature (for I will not call him man) conspicuous in misfortune. This is he who has forfeited his birthright of expression, who has cultivated artful intonations, who has taught his face tricks, like a pet monkey, and on every side perverted or cut off his means of communication with his fellow-men. The body is a house of many windows: there we all sit, showing ourselves and crying on the passers-by to come and love us. But this fellow has filled his windows with opaque glass, elegantly colored. His house may be admired for its design, the crowd may pause before the stained windows, but meanwhile the poor proprietor must lie languishing within, un comforted, unchangeably alone.

Truth of intercourse is something more difficult than to refrain from open lies. It is possible to avoid falsehood and yet not tell the truth. It is not enough to answer formal questions. To reach the truth by yea and nay communications implies a questioner with a share of inspiration, such as is often found in mutual love. *Yea* and *nay* mean nothing; the meaning must have been related in the question. Many words are often necessary to convey a very simple statement; for in this sort of exercise we never hit the gold; the most that we can hope is by many arrows, more or less far off on different sides, to indicate, in the course of time, for what target we are aiming, and after an hour's talk, back and forward, to convey the purport of a single principle or a single thought. And yet while the curt, pithy speaker misses the point entirely, a wordy, prolegomenous babbler will often add three new offenses in the process of excusing one. It

is really a most delicate affair. The world was made before the English language, and seemingly upon a different design. Suppose we held our converse not in words, but in music; those who have a bad ear would find themselves cut off from all near commerce, and no better than foreigners in this big world. But we do not consider how many have "a bad ear" for words, nor how often the most eloquent find nothing to reply. I hate questioners and questions; there are so few that can be spoken to without a lie. "*Do you forgive me?*" Madam and sweetheart, so far as I have gone in life, I have never yet been able to discover what forgiveness means. "*Is it still the same between us?*" Why, how can it be? It is eternally different; and yet you are still the friend of my heart. "*Do you understand me?*" God knows; I should think it highly improbable.

The cruelest lies are often told in silence. A man may have sat in a room for hours and not opened his teeth, and yet come out of that room a disloyal friend or a vile calumniator. And how many loves have perished because, from pride, or spite, or diffidence, or that unmanly shame which withholds a man from daring to betray emotion, a lover, at the critical point of the relation, has but hung his head and held his tongue? And, again, a lie may be told by a truth, or a truth conveyed through a lie. Truth to facts is not always truth to sentiment; and part of the truth, as often happens in answer to a question, may be the foulest calumny. A fact may be an exception; but the feeling is the law, and it is that which you must neither garble nor belie. The whole tenor of a conversation is a part of the meaning of each separate statement; the beginning and the end define and travesty the intermediate conversation. You never speak to God; you address a fellow-man, full of his own tempers; and to tell truth, rightly understood, is not to state the true facts, but to convey a true impression; truth in spirit, not truth to

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etter, is the true veracity. To reconcile averted friends a Jesuitical discretion is often needful, not so much to gain a kind hearing as to communicate sober truth. Women have an ill name in this connection; yet they live in as true relations; the lie of a good woman is the true index of her heart.

"It takes," says Thoreau, in the noblest and most useful passage I remember to have read in any modern author,¹ "two to speak truth—one to speak and another to hear." He must be very little experienced, or have no great zeal for truth, who does not recognize the fact. A grain of anger or a grain of suspicion produces strange acoustical effects, and makes the ear greedy to remark offense. Hence we find those who have once quarreled carry themselves distantly, and are ever ready to break the truce. To speak truth there must be moral equality or else no respect; and hence between parent and child intercourse is apt to degenerate into a verbal fencing bout, and misapprehensions to become ingrained. And there is another side to this, for the parent begins with an imperfect notion of the child's character, formed in early years or during the equinoctial gales of youth; to this he adheres, noting only the facts which suit with his preconception; and whenever a person fancies himself unjustly judged, he at once and finally gives up the effort to speak truth. With our chosen friends, on the other hand, and still more between lovers (for mutual understanding is love's essence), the truth is easily indicated by the one and aptly comprehended by the other. A hint taken, a look understood, conveys the gist of long and delicate explanations; and where the life is known even *yea* and *nay* become luminous. In the closest of all relations—that of a love well founded and equally shared—speech is half discarded, like a roundabout, infantile process or a ceremony of formal etiquette; and the two communicate directly

¹ *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers*, Wednesday, p. 53.
[Author's note.]

by their presences, and with few looks and fewer words contrive to share their good and evil and uphold each other's hearts in joy. For love rests upon a physical basis; it is a familiarity of nature's making and apart from voluntary choice. Understanding has in some sort outrun knowledge, for the affection perhaps began with the acquaintance; and as it was not made like other relations, so it is not, like them, to be perturbed or clouded. Each knows more than can be uttered; each lives by faith, and believes by a natural compulsion; and between man and wife the language of the body is largely developed and grown strangely eloquent. The thought that prompted and was conveyed in a caress would only lose to be set down in words—ay, although Shakespeare himself should be the scribe.

Yet it is in these dear intimacies, beyond all others, that we must strive and do battle for the truth. Let but a doubt arise, and alas! all the previous intimacy and confidence is but another charge against the person doubted. "*What a monstrous dishonesty is this if I have been deceived so long and so completely!*" Let but that thought gain entrance, and you plead before a deaf tribunal. Appeal to the past; why, that is your crime! Make all clear, convince the reason; alas! speciousness is but a proof against you. "*If you can abuse me now, the more likely that you have abused me from the first.*"

For a strong affection such moments are worth supporting, and they will end well; for your advocate is in your lover's heart, and speaks her own language; it is not you but she herself who can defend and clear you of the charge. But in slighter intimacies, and for a less stringent union? Indeed, is it worth while? We are all *incompris*,¹ only more or less concerned for the mischance; all trying wrongly to do right; all fawning at each other's feet like dumb, neglected lap-dogs. Sometimes we catch an eye—this is our opportunity in the

¹ Misunderstood.

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ages—and we wag our tail with a poor smile. “*Is that all?*” All? If you only knew! But how can they know? They do not love us; the more fools we to squander life on the indifferent.

But the morality of the thing, you will be glad to hear, is excellent; for it is only by trying to understand others that we can get our own hearts understood; and in matters of human feeling the clement judge is the most successful pleader.

James Russell Lowell

IT is a singular fact that Mr. Emerson is the most steadily attractive lecturer in America. Into that somewhat cold-waterish region adventurers of the sensational kind come down now and then with a splash, to become disregarded King Logs before the next season. But Mr. Emerson always draws. A lecturer now for something like a third of a century, one of the pioneers of the lecturing system, the charm of his voice, his manner, and his matter has never lost its power over his earlier hearers, and continually winds new ones in its enchanting meshes. What they do not fully understand they take on trust, and listen, saying to themselves, as the old poet of Sir Philip Sidney,—

“A sweet, attractive kind of grace,
A full assurance given by looks,
Continual comfort in a face,
The lineaments of gospel books.”²

We call it a singular fact, because we Yankees are thought to be fond of the spread-eagle style, and nothing can be more remote from that than his. We are reckoned a practical folk, who would rather hear about a new air-tight stove than about Plato; yet our favorite teacher's practicality is not in the least of the Poor Richard variety.³ If he have any Buncombe constituency, it is that unrealized commonwealth of philosophers which Plotinus proposed to establish; and if he were

¹ The article is in the nature of a commentary on a course of lectures.

² These lines, and also those quoted at the conclusion of the article, are from an elegy on the death of Sir Philip Sidney by Matthew Roydon.

³ Some notion of the Poor Richard variety may be gathered from the sayings quoted below, pp. 409f.

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to make an almanac, his directions to farmers would be something like this: "OCTOBER: *Indian Summer*; now is the time to get in your early Vedas." ¹ What, then, is his secret? Is it not that he out-Yankees us all? that his range includes us all? that he is equally at home with the potato-disease and original sin, with pegging shoes and the Over-Soul? that, as we try all trades, so has he tried all cultures? and above all, that his mysticism gives us a counterpoise to our super-practicality?

There is no man living to whom, as a writer, so many of us feel and thankfully acknowledge so great an indebtedness for ennobling impulses,—none whom so many cannot abide. What does he mean? ask these last. Where is his system? What is the use of it all? What the deuce have we to do with Brahma? ² I do not propose to write an essay on Emerson at this time. I will only say that one may find grandeur and consolation in a starlit night without caring to ask what it means, save grandeur and consolation; one may like Montaigne, as some ten generations before us have done, without thinking him so systematic as some more eminently tedious (or shall we say tediously eminent?) authors; one may think roses as good in their way as cabbages, though the latter would make a better show in the witness-box, if cross-examined as to their usefulness; and as for Brahma, why, he can take care of himself, and won't bite us at any rate.

The bother with Mr. Emerson is, that, though he writes in prose, he is essentially a poet. If you undertake to paraphrase what he says, and to reduce it to words of one syllable for infant minds, you will make as sad work of it as the good monk with his analysis of Homer in the "*Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*." ³ We look upon him as one of the few men of genius whom our age has produced, and there needs no better

¹ See footnote above, p. 87.

² Emerson's poem "Brahma" is reprinted in *Poetry*, p. 737.

³ "Letters of Unknown Men"—an anonymous, anti-Catholic publication of the early sixteenth century.

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proof of it than his masculine faculty of fecundating other minds. Search for his eloquence in his books and you will perchance miss it, but meanwhile you will find that it has kindled all your thoughts. For choice and pith of language he belongs to a better age than ours, and might rub shoulders with Fuller and Browne,—though he does use that abominable word *reliable*. His eye for a fine, telling phrase that will carry true is like that of a backwoodsman for a rifle; and he will dredge you up a choice word from the mud of Cotton Mather himself. A diction at once so rich and so homely as his I know not where to match in these days of writing by the page; it is like homespun cloth-of-gold. The many cannot miss his meaning, and only the few can find it. It is the open secret of all true genius. It is wholesome to angle in those profound pools, though one be rewarded with nothing more than the leap of a fish that flashes his freckled side in the sun and as suddenly absconds in the dark and dreamy waters again. There is keen excitement, though there be no ponderable acquisition. If we carry nothing home in our baskets, there is ample gain in dilated lungs and stimulated blood. What does he mean, quotha? He means inspiring hints, a divining-rod to your deeper nature. No doubt, Emerson, like all original men, has his peculiar audience, and yet I know none that can hold a promiscuous crowd in pleased attention so long as he. As in all original men, there is something for every palate. "Would you know," says Goethe, "the ripest cherries? Ask the boys and the blackbirds."

The announcement that such a pleasure as a new course of lectures by him is coming, to people as old as I am, is something like those forebodings of spring that prepare us every year for a familiar novelty, none the less novel, when it arrives, because it is familiar. We know perfectly well what we are to expect from Mr. Emerson, and yet what he says always penetrates and stirs us, as is apt to be the case with

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genius, in a very unlooked-for fashion. Perhaps genius is one of the few things which we gladly allow to repeat itself,—one of the few that multiply rather than weaken the force of their impression by iteration? Perhaps some of us hear more than the mere words, are moved by something deeper than the thoughts? If it be so, we are quite right, for it is thirty years and more of “plain living and high thinking”¹ that speak to us in this altogether unique lay-preacher. We have shared in the beneficence of this varied culture, this fearless impartiality in criticism and speculation, this masculine sincerity, this sweetness of nature which rather stimulates than cloy, for a generation long. If ever there was a standing testimonial to the cumulative power and value of Character (and we need it sadly in these days), we have it in this gracious and dignified presence.² What an antiseptic is a pure life! At sixty-five (or two years beyond his grand climacteric, as he would prefer to call it) he has that privilege of soul which abolishes the calendar, and presents him to us always the unwasted contemporary of his own prime. I do not know if he seem old to his younger hearers, but we who have known

¹ For the source of the quotation see Wordsworth's sonnet beginning "O Friend! I know not," *Poetry*, p. 591.

² "His [Emerson's] life, his character, his personality—quite apart, I mean, from the validity of his precepts—have the potency belonging to the personality of the founders of religions who have left no written words. . . . One feels that what he says possesses a virtue of its own in the fact of having been said by him. He has limitations but no infirmities. . . . There is a wealth of recorded personal reminiscence about him and one may soberly say there has been found 'no fault in him.' . . . Nor was his blamelessness in the least alloyed with weakness. His energy was as marked as his rectitude. . . . He is of our time, of our day, he lived and wrote but yesterday at Concord, Massachusetts, he passed through the most stirring times, he shared, with whatever spiritual aloofness, the daily life of his fellows and neighbors and was part and parcel of a modern American community for nearly fourscore years, and never in any respect or in the slightest degree, in any crisis or any trivial detail of humdrum existence, failed to illustrate—to incarnate—the ideal life. . . . To 'mark the perfect man' has been left to America and American literature."—W. C. BROWNELL. (From *American Prose Masters*. Reprinted with the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.)

him so long wonder at the tenacity with which he maintains himself even in the outposts of youth. I suppose it is not the Emerson of 1868 to whom we listen. For us the whole life of the man is distilled in the clear drop of every sentence, and behind each word we divine the force of a noble character, the weight of a large capital of thinking and being. We do not go to hear what Emerson says so much as to hear Emerson. Not that we perceive any falling-off in anything that ever was essential to the charm of Mr. Emerson's peculiar style of thought or phrase. The first lecture, to be sure, was more disjointed even than common. It was as if, after vainly trying to get his paragraphs into sequence and order, he had at last tried the desperate expedient of *shuffling* them. It was chaos come again, but it was a chaos full of shooting-stars, a jumble of creative forces. The second lecture, on "Criticism and Poetry," was quite up to the level of old times, full of that power of strangely subtle association whose indirect approaches startle the mind into almost painful attention, of those flashes of mutual understanding between speaker and hearer that are gone ere one can say it lightens.¹ The vice of Emerson's criticism seems to be, that while no man is so sensitive to what is poetical, few men are less sensible than he of what makes a poem. He values the solid meaning of thought above the subtler meaning of style. He would prefer Donne, I suspect, to Spenser, and sometimes mistakes the queer for the original.

To be young is surely the best, if the most precarious, gift of life; yet there are some of us who would hardly consent to be young again, if it were at the cost of our recollection of Mr. Emerson's first lectures during the consulate of Van Buren. We used to walk in from the country to the Masonic Temple

¹ The last words of the sentence are from a scene in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. See *Poetry*, p. 359.

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(I think it was), through the crisp winter night, and listen to that thrilling voice of his, so charged with subtle meaning and subtle music, as shipwrecked men on a raft to the hail of a ship that came with un hoped-for food and rescue. Cynics might say what they liked. Did our own imaginations transfigure dry remainder-biscuit into ambrosia? At any rate, he brought us *life*, which, on the whole, is no bad thing. Was it all transcendentalism? magic-lantern pictures on mist? As you will. Those, then, were just what we wanted. But it was not so. The delight and the benefit were that he put us in communication with a larger style of thought, sharpened our wits with a more pungent phrase, gave us ravishing glimpses of an ideal under the dry husk of our New England; made us conscious of the supreme and everlasting originality of whatever bit of soul might be in any of us; freed us, in short, from the stocks of prose in which we had sat so long that we had grown well-nigh contented in our cramps. And who that saw the audience will ever forget it, where everyone still capable of fire, or longing to renew in himself the half-forgotten sense of it, was gathered? Those faces, young and old, agleam with pale intellectual light, eager with pleased attention, flash upon me once more from the deep recesses of the years with an exquisite pathos. Ah, beautiful young eyes, brimming with love and hope, wholly vanished now in that other world we call the Past, or peering doubtfully through the pensive gloaming of memory, your light impoverishes these cheaper days! I hear again that rustle of sensation, as they turned to exchange glances over some pithier thought, some keener flash of that humor which always played about the horizon of his mind like heat-lightning, and it seems now like the sad whisper of the autumn leaves that are whirling around me. But would my picture be complete if I forgot that ample and vegeate countenance of Mr. R—— of W——, —

how, from its regular post at the corner of the front bench, it turned in ruddy triumph to the profaner audience as if he were the inexplicably appointed fugleman of appreciation? I was reminded of him by those hearty cherubs in Titian's Assumption that look at you as who should say, "Did you ever see a Madonna like *that*? Did you ever behold one hundred and fifty pounds of womanhood mount heavenward before like a rocket?"

To some of us that long-past experience remains as the most marvelous and fruitful we have ever had. Emerson awakened us, saved us from the body of this death. It is the sound of the trumpet that the young soul longs for, careless what breath may fill it. Sidney heard it in the ballad of "Chevy Chase,"¹ and we in Emerson. Nor did it blow retreat, but called to us with assurance of victory. Did they say he was disconnected? So were the stars, that seemed larger to our eyes, still keen with that excitement, as we walked homeward with prouder stride over the creaking snow. And were *they* not knit together by a higher logic than our mere sense could master? Were we enthusiasts? I hope and believe we were, and am thankful to the man who made us worth something for once in our lives. If asked what was left? what we carried home? we should not have been careful for an answer. It would have been enough if we had said that something beautiful had passed that way. Or we might have asked in return what one brought away from a symphony of Beethoven? Enough that he had set that ferment of wholesome discontent at work in us. There is one, at least, of those old hearers, so many of whom are now in the fruition of that intellectual beauty of which Emerson gave them both the desire and the foretaste, who will always love to repeat:—

¹ Sidney's words have become famous: "I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet."

"Che in la mente m' è fitta, ed or m' accuora
La cara e buona immagine paterna
Di voi, quando nel mondo ad ora ad ora
M' insegnavaste come l' uom s' eterna."¹

I am unconsciously thinking, as I write, of the third lecture of the present course, in which Mr. Emerson gave some delightful reminiscences of the intellectual influences in whose movement he had shared. It was like hearing Goethe read some passages of the "*Wahrheit aus seinem Leben*."² Not that there was not a little *Dichtung*, too, here and there, as the lecturer built up so lofty a pedestal under certain figures as to lift them into a prominence of obscurity, and seem to mast-head them there. Everybody was asking his neighbor who this or that recondite great man was, in the faint hope that somebody might once have heard of him. There are those who call Mr. Emerson cold. Let them revise their judgment in presence of this loyalty of his that can keep warm for half a century, that never forgets a friendship, or fails to pay even a fancied obligation to the uttermost farthing. This substantiation of shadows was but incidental, and pleasantly characteristic of the man to those who know and love him. The greater part of the lecture was devoted to reminiscences of things substantial in themselves. He spoke of Everett, fresh from Greece and Germany;³ of Channing; of the translations of Margaret Fuller, Ripley, and Dwight; of the "Dial" and Brook Farm. To what he said of the latter an undertone of good-humored irony gave special zest. But what every one of his hearers felt was that the protagonist in the drama was

¹ "For in my memory is fixed, and now goes to my heart, the dear and kind paternal image of you, when in the world, hour by hour, you taught me how man makes himself eternal"—words of gratitude spoken by Dante to the shade of Brunetto Latini, whom he regarded as his teacher. (John Carlyle's translation.)

² Goethe called his autobiography "*Aus Meinem Leben Dichtung und Wahrheit*," "Poetry and Truth Out of My Life"—the "*Dichtung*" suggesting an admixture of fiction with the truth.

³ Emerson as a boy of sixteen heard Everett's Introductory Lecture at Harvard College. See below, pp. 557f.

left out. The lecturer was no Æneas to babble the *quorum magna pars fui*,¹ and, as one of his listeners, I cannot help wishing to say how each of them was commenting the story as it went along, and filling up the necessary gaps in it from his own private store of memories. His younger hearers could not know how much they owed to the benign impersonality, the quiet scorn of everything ignoble, the never-sated hunger of self-culture, that were personified in the man before them. But the older knew how much the country's intellectual emancipation was due to the stimulus of his teaching and example, how constantly he had kept burning the beacon of an ideal life above our lower region of turmoil. To him more than to all other causes together did the young martyrs of our civil war owe the sustaining strength of thoughtful heroism that is so touching in every record of their lives. Those who are grateful to Mr. Emerson, as many of us are, for what they feel to be most valuable in their culture, or perhaps I should say their impulse, are grateful not so much for any direct teachings of his as for that inspiring lift which only genius can give, and without which all doctrine is chaff.

This was something like the *caret* which some of us older boys wished to fill up on the margin of the master's lecture. Few men have been so much to so many, and through so large a range of aptitudes and temperaments, and this simply because all of us value manhood beyond any or all other qualities of character. We may suspect in him, here and there, a certain thinness and vagueness of quality, but let the waters go over him as they list, this masculine fiber of his will keep its lively color and its toughness of texture. I have heard some great speakers and some accomplished orators, but never any that so moved and persuaded men as he. There is a kind of undertow in that rich baritone of his that sweeps

¹ Of which things I was myself a great part. (Virgil reads *quorum magna pars fui*.)

our minds from their foothold into deeper waters with a drift we cannot and would not resist. And how artfully (for Emerson is a long-studied artist in these things) does the deliberate utterance, that seems waiting for the fit word, appear to admit us partners in the labor of thought and make us feel as if the glance of humor were a sudden suggestion, as if the perfect phrase lying written there on the desk were as unexpected to him as to us! In that closely filed speech of his at the Burns centenary dinner, every word seemed to have just dropped down to him from the clouds. He looked far away over the heads of his hearers, with a vague kind of expectation, as into some private heaven of invention, and the winged period came at last obedient to his spell. "My dainty Ariel!"¹ he seemed murmuring to himself as he cast down his eyes as if in deprecation of the frenzy of approval and caught another sentence from the Sibylline leaves that lay before him, ambushed behind a dish of fruit and seen only by nearest neighbors. Every sentence brought down the house, as I never saw one brought down before,—and it is not so easy to hit Scotsmen with a sentiment that has no hint of native brogue in it. I watched, for it was an interesting study, how the quick sympathy ran flashing from face to face down the long tables, like an electric spark thrilling as it went, and then exploded in a thunder of plaudits. I watched till tables and faces vanished, for I, too, found myself caught up in the common enthusiasm, and my excited fancy set me under the *bema*² listening to him who fulminated over Greece. I can never help applying to him what Ben Jonson said of Bacon: "There happened in my time one noble speaker, who was full of gravity in his speaking. His language was nobly censorious. No man ever spake more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he

¹ Ariel is the fairy sprite obedient to the commands of Prospero in Shakespeare's *Tempest*.

² Platform.

uttered. No member of his speech but consisted of his own graces. His hearers could not cough, or look aside from him, without loss. He commanded where he spoke." Those who heard him while their natures were yet plastic, and their mental nerves trembled under the slightest breath of divine air, will never cease to feel and say:—

“Was never eye did see that face,
Was never ear did hear that tongue,
Was never mind did mind his grace,
That ever thought the travail long;
But eyes, and ears, and every thought,
Were with his sweet perfection caught.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

EVERY soul is a celestial Venus to every other soul. The heart has its Sabbaths and jubilees, in which the world appears as a hymeneal feast, and all natural sounds and the circle of the seasons are erotic odes and dances. Love is omnipresent in nature as motive and reward. Love is our highest word, and the synonym of God. Every promise of the soul has innumerable fulfillments; each of its joys ripens into a new want. Nature, uncontainable, flowing, forelooking, in the first sentiment of kindness anticipates already a benevolence which shall lose all particular regards in its general light. The introduction to this felicity is in a private and tender relation of one to one, which is the enchantment of human life; which, like a certain divine rage and enthusiasm, seizes on man at one period, and works a revolution in his mind and body; unites him to his race, pledges him to the domestic and civic relations, carries him with new sympathy into nature, enhances the power of his senses, opens the imagination, adds to his character heroic and sacred attributes, establishes marriage, and gives permanence to human society.

The natural association of the sentiment of love with the heyday of the blood seems to require that in order to portray it in vivid tints, which every youth and maid should confess to be true to their throbbing experience, one must not be too old. The delicious fancies of youth reject the least savor of a mature philosophy, as chilling with age and pedantry their purple bloom. And therefore I know I incur the imputation of unnecessary hardness and stoicism from those who compose

the Court and Parliament of Love.¹ But from these formidable censors I shall appeal to my seniors. For it is to be considered, that this passion of which we speak, though it begin with the young, yet forsakes not the old, or rather suffers no one who is truly its servant to grow old, but makes the aged participators of it, not less than the tender maiden, though in a different and nobler sort. For it is a fire that, kindling its first embers in the narrow nook of a private bosom, caught from a wandering spark out of another private heart, glows and enlarges until it warms and beams upon multitudes of men and women, upon the universal heart of all, and so lights up the whole world and all nature with its generous flames. It matters not, therefore, whether we attempt to describe the passion at twenty, at thirty, or at eighty years. He who paints it at the first period will lose some of its later, he who paints it at the last, some of its earlier traits. Only it is to be hoped that, by patience and the Muses' aid, we may attain to that inward view of the law, which shall describe a truth ever young, ever beautiful, so central that it shall commend itself to the eye at whatever angle beholden.

And the first condition is, that we must leave a too close and lingering adherence to the actual, to facts, and study the sentiment as it appeared in hope and not in history. For each man sees his own life defaced and disfigured, as the life of man is not, to his imagination. Each man sees over his own experience a certain slime of error, whilst that of other men looks fair and ideal. Let any man go back to those delicious relations which make the beauty of his life, which have given him sincerest instruction and nourishment, he will shrink and shrink. Alas! I know not why, but infinite compunctions embitter in mature life all the remembrances of budding sentiment, and cover every beloved name. Every-

¹ In allusion to the mediæval Court of Love, a real or fancied institution composed of noble dames and exercising jurisdiction over delicate questions of love and chivalry.

thing is beautiful seen from the point of the intellect, or as truth. But all is sour, if seen as experience. Details are always melancholy; the plan is seemly and noble. It is strange how painful is the actual world,—the painful kingdom of time and place. There dwell care and canker and fear. With thought, with the ideal, is immortal hilarity, the rose of joy. Round it all the Muses sing. But with names and persons, and the partial interests of to-day and yesterday, is grief.

The strong bent of nature is seen in the proportion which this topic of personal relations usurps in the conversation of society. What do we wish to know of any worthy person so much as how he has sped in the history of this sentiment? What books in the circulating libraries circulate? How we glow over these novels of passion, when the story is told with any spark of truth and nature! And what fastens attention, in the intercourse of life, like any passage betraying affection between two parties? Perhaps we never saw them before, and never shall meet them again. But we see them exchange a glance, or betray a deep emotion, and we are no longer strangers. We understand them, and take the warmest interest in the development of the romance. All mankind love a lover. The earliest demonstrations of complacency and kindness are nature's most winning pictures. It is the dawn of civility and grace in the coarse and rustic. The rude village boy teases the girls about the school-house door;—but to-day he comes running into the entry, and meets one fair child arranging her satchel; he holds her books to help her, and instantly it seems to him as if she removed herself from him infinitely, and was a sacred precinct. Among the throng of girls he runs rudely enough, but one alone distances him: and these two little neighbors, that were so close just now, have learned to respect each other's personality. Or who can avert his eyes from the engaging, half-artful, half-artless ways of schoolgirls who go into the country shops to buy a skein of silk or a sheet of paper,

and talk half an hour about nothing with the broad-faced, good-natured shop-boy? In the village they are on a perfect equality, which love delights in, and without any coquetry the happy, affectionate nature of woman flows out in this pretty gossip. The girls may have little beauty, yet plainly do they establish between them and the good boy the most agreeable, confiding relations, what with their fun and their earnest, about Edgar, and Jonas, and Almira, and who was invited to the party, and who danced at the dancing school, and when the singing school would begin, and other nothings concerning which the parties cooed. By and by that boy wants a wife, and very truly and heartily will he know where to find a sincere and sweet mate, without any risk such as Milton deploras as incident to scholars and great men.

I have been told that my philosophy is unsocial, and that, in public discourses, my reverence for the intellect makes me unjustly cold to the personal relations. But now I almost shrink at the remembrance of such disparaging words. For persons are love's world, and the coldest philosopher cannot recount the debt of the young soul wandering here in nature to the power of love, without being tempted to unsay, as treasonable to nature, aught derogatory to the social instincts. For, though the celestial rapture falling out of heaven seizes only upon those of tender age, and although a beauty overpowering all analysis or comparison, and putting us quite beside ourselves, we can seldom see after thirty years, yet the remembrance of these visions outlasts all other remembrances, and is a wreath of flowers on the oldest brows. But here is a strange fact, it may seem to many men, in revising their experience, that they have no fairer page in their life's book than the delicious memory of some passages wherein affection contrived to give a witchcraft surpassing the deep attraction of its own truth to a parcel of accidental and trivial circumstances. In looking backward, they may find that several things

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which were not the charm have more reality to this groping memory than the charm itself which embalmed them. But in our experience in particulars what it may, no man ever forgot the visitations of that power to his heart and brain, which created all things new; which was the dawn in him of music, poetry, and art; which made the face of nature radiant with purple light, the morning and the night varied enchantments; when a single tone of one voice could make the heart beat, and the most trivial circumstance associated with one form is put in the amber of memory; when we became all eye when one was present, and all memory when one was gone; when the youth becomes a watcher of windows, and studious of a glove, a veil, a ribbon, or the wheels of a carriage; when no place is too solitary and none too silent for him who has richer company and sweeter conversation in his new thoughts than any old friends, though best and purest, can give him; for the figures, the motions, the words of the beloved object are not like other images written in water, but, as Plutarch said, "enameled in fire," and make the study of midnight.

"Thou art not gone being gone, where'er thou art;
Thou leav'st in him thy watchful eyes, in him
thy loving heart."

In the noon and the afternoon of life we still throb at the recollection of days when happiness was not happy enough, but must be drugged with the relish of pain and fear; for we touched the secret of the matter who said of love,

"All other pleasures are not worth its pains."

and when the day was not long enough, but the night too must be consumed in keen recollections; when the head boiled all night on the pillow with the generous deed it resolved on; when the moonlight was a pleasing fever, and the stars were

letters, and the flowers ciphers, and the air was coined into song; when all business seemed an impertinence, and all the men and women running to and fro in the streets mere pictures.

The passion re-makes the world for the youth. It makes all things alive and significant. Nature grows conscious. Every bird on the boughs of the tree sings now to his heart and soul. Almost the notes are articulate. The clouds have faces as he looks on them. The trees of the forest, the waving grass, and the peeping flowers, have grown intelligent; and almost he fears to trust them with the secret which they seem to invite. Yet nature soothes and sympathizes. In the green solitude he finds a dearer home than with men.

“Fountain-heads and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves,
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
Are safely housed, save bats and owls,
A midnight bell, a passing groan,—
These are the sounds we feed upon.”

Behold there in the wood the fine madman! He is a palace of sweet sounds and sights; he dilates; he is twice a man; he walks with arms akimbo; he soliloquizes; he accosts the grass and the trees; he feels the blood of the violet, the clover, and the lily, in his veins; and he talks with the brook that wets his foot.

The causes that have sharpened his perceptions of natural beauty have made him love music and verse. It is a fact often observed, that men have written good verses under the inspiration of passion, who cannot write well under any other circumstances.

The like force has the passion over all his nature. It expands the sentiment; it makes the clown gentle, and gives the coward heart. Into the most pitiful and abject it will infuse a heart and courage to defy the world, so only it have the

maintenance of the beloved object. In giving him to another, it still more gives him to himself. He is a new man, with new perceptions, new and keener purposes, and a religious solemnity of character and aims. He does not longer appear in to his family and society. *He* is somewhat. *He* is a person. *He* is a soul.

And here let us examine a little nearer the nature of that influence which is thus potent over the human youth. Let us approach and admire Beauty, whose revelation to man we now celebrate,—beauty, welcome as the sun wherever it pleases to shine, which pleases everybody with it and with themselves. Wonderful is its charm. It seems sufficient to itself. The lover cannot paint his maiden to his fancy poor and solitary. Like a tree in flower, so much soft, budding, informing loveliness is society for itself, and she teaches his eye why Beauty has ever painted with Loves and Graces attending her steps. Her existence makes the world rich. Though she excludes all other persons from his attention as cheap and unworthy, yet she indemnifies him by carrying out her own being into somewhat impersonal, large, mundane, so that the maiden stands to him for a representative of all select things and virtues. For that reason the lover sees never personal resemblances in his mistress to her kindred or to others. His friends find in her likeness to her mother, or her sisters, or to persons not of her blood. The lover sees no resemblance except to summer evenings and diamond mornings, to rainbows and the song of birds. Beauty is ever that divine thing the ancients esteemed it. It is, they said, the flowering of virtue. Who can analyze the timeless charm which glances from one and another face and form? We are touched with emotions of tenderness and commiseration, but we cannot find whereat this dainty emotion, this wandering gleam points. It is destroyed for the imagination by any attempt to refer it to organization. Nor does it point to any relations of friendship or love that society knows and

has; but, as it seems to me, to a quite other and unattainable sphere, to relations of transcendent delicacy and sweetness, a true faerie land; to what roses and violets hint and foreshow. We cannot get at beauty. Its nature is like opaline doves'-neck lusters, hovering and evanescent. Herein it resembles the most excellent things, which all have this rainbow character, defying all attempts at appropriation and use. What else did Jean Paul Richter signify, when he said to music, "Away! away! thou speakest to me of things which in all my endless life I have found not, and shall not find." The same fact may be observed in every work of the plastic arts. The statue is then beautiful, when it begins to be incomprehensible, when it is passing out of criticism, and can no longer be defined by compass and measuring wand, but demands an active imagination to go with it, and to say what it is in the act of doing. The god or hero of the sculptor is always represented in a transition *from* that which is representable to the senses, *to* that which is not. Then first it ceases to be a stone. The same remark holds of painting. And of poetry, the success is not attained when it lulls and satisfies, but when it astonishes and fires us with new endeavors after the unattainable. Concerning it, Landor inquires, "whether it is not to be referred to some purer state of sensation and existence."

So must it be with personal beauty, which love worships. Then first is it charming and itself, when it dissatisfies us with any end; when it becomes a story without an end; when it suggests gleams and visions, and not earthly satisfactions; when it seems

"too bright and good
For human nature's daily food";¹

when it makes the beholder feel his unworthiness; when he cannot feel his right to it, though he were Cæsar; he cannot

¹ From Wordsworth's poem beginning "She was a phantom of delight." See *Poetry*, p. 475.

feel more right to it than to the firmament and the splendors of a sunset.

Hence arose the saying, "If I love you, what is that to you?" We say so, because we feel that what we love is not in your will, but above it. It is the radiance of you, and not you. It is that which you know not in yourself, and can never know.

This agrees well with that high philosophy of Beauty which the ancient writers delighted in; for they said, that the soul of man, embodied here on earth, went roaming up and down in quest of that other world of its own, out of which it came into this, but was soon stupefied by the light of the natural sun, and unable to see any other objects than those of this world, which are but shadows of real things. Therefore the Deity sends the glory of youth before the soul, that it may avail itself of beautiful bodies as aids to its recollection of the celestial good and fair; and the man beholding such a person in the female sex, runs to her, and finds the highest joy in contemplating the form, movement, and intelligence of this person, because it suggests to him the presence of that which indeed is within the beauty, and the cause of the beauty.

If, however, from too much conversing with material objects, the soul was gross, and misplaced its satisfaction in the body, it reaped nothing but sorrow; body being unable to fulfill the promise which beauty holds out; but if, accepting the hint of these visions and suggestions which beauty makes to his mind, the soul passes through the body, and falls to admire strokes of character, and the lovers contemplate one another in their discourses and their actions, then they pass to the true palace of Beauty, more and more inflame their love of it, and by this love extinguishing the base affection, as the sun puts out the fire by shining on the hearth, they become pure and hallowed. By conversation with that which is in itself excellent, mag-

unanimous, lowly, and just, the lover comes to a warmer love of these nobilities, and a quicker apprehension of them. Then he passes from loving them in one, to loving them in all; and so is the one beautiful soul only the door through which he enters to the society of all true and pure souls. In the particular society of his mate he attains a clearer sight of any spot, any taint, which her beauty has contracted from this world, and is able to point it out, and this with mutual joy that they are now able without offense to indicate blemishes and hindrances in each other, and give to each all help and comfort in curing the same. And, beholding in many souls the traits of the divine beauty, and separating in each soul that which is divine from the taint which it has contracted in the world, the lover ascends ever to the highest beauty, to the love and knowledge of the Divinity, by steps on this ladder of created souls.

Somewhat like this have the truly wise told us of love in all ages. The doctrine is not old, nor is it new. If Plato, Plutarch, and Apuleius taught it, so have Petrarch, Angelo, and Milton. It awaits a truer unfolding, in opposition and rebuke to that subterranean prudence which presides at marriages with words that take hold of the upper world, whilst one eye is eternally boring down into the cellar, so that its gravest discourse has ever a slight savor of hams and powdering-tubs.¹ Worst, when the snout of this sensualism intrudes into the education of young women, and withers the hope and affection of human nature, by teaching that marriage signifies nothing but a housewife's thrift, and that woman's life has no other aim.

But this dream of love, though beautiful, is only one scene in our play. In the procession of the soul from within outward, it enlarges its circles ever, like the pebble thrown into the pond, or the light proceeding from an orb. The rays of

¹ A tub in which meat is "powdered," or preserved.

the soul alight first on the things nearest, on every utensil and toy, on nurses and domestics, on the house and yard and passengers, on the circle of household acquaintance, on politics, and geography, and history. But by the necessity of our constitution, things are ever grouping themselves according to higher or more interior laws. Neighborhood, size, numbers, habits, persons, lose by degrees their power over us. Cause and effect, real affinities, the longing for harmony between the soul and the circumstance, the high progressive idealizing instinct, these predominate later, and ever the step backward from the higher to the lower relations is impossible. Thus even love, which is the deification of persons, must become more impersonal every day. Of this at first it gives no hint. Little think the youth and maiden who are glancing at each other across crowded rooms, with eyes so full of mutual intelligence,—of the precious fruit long hereafter to proceed from this new, quite external stimulus. The work of vegetation begins first in the irritability of the bark and leaf-buds. From exchanging glances, they advance to acts of courtesy, of gallantry, then to fiery passion, to plighting troth and marriage. Passion beholds its object as a perfect unit. The soul is wholly embodied, and the body is wholly ensouled.

“Her pure and eloquent blood
 Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
 That one might almost say her body thought.”

Romeo, if dead, should be cut up into little stars to make the heavens fine.¹ Life, with this pair, has no other aim, asks no more than Juliet,—than Romeo. Night, day, studies, talents, kingdoms, religion, are all contained in this form full of soul,

¹ “Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-brow’d night,
 Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,
 Take him and cut him out in little stars,
 And he will make the face of heaven so fine
 That all the world will be in love with night
 And pay no worship to the garish sun.”

—SHAKESPEARE, *Romeo and Juliet*.

in this soul which is all form. The lovers delight in endearments, in avowals of love, in comparisons of their regards. When alone, they solace themselves with the remembered image of the other. Does that other see the same star, the same melting cloud, read the same book, feel the same emotion, that now delight me? They try and weigh their affection, and adding up all costly advantages, friends, opportunities, properties, exult in discovering that willingly, joyfully, they would give all as a ransom for the beautiful, the beloved head, not one hair of which shall be harmed. But the lot of humanity is on these children. Danger, sorrow, and pain arrive to them, as to all. Love prays. It makes covenants with Eternal Power, in behalf of this dear mate. The union which is thus effected, and which adds a new value to every atom in nature,—for it transmutes every thread throughout the whole web of relation into a golden ray, and bathes the soul in a new and sweeter element,—is yet a temporary state. Not always can flowers, pearls, poetry, protestations, nor even home in another heart, content the awful soul that dwells in clay. It arouses itself at last from these endearments, as toys, and puts on the harness, and aspires to vast and universal aims. The soul which is in the soul of each, craving for a perfect beatitude, detects incongruities, defects, and disproportion in the behavior of the other. Hence arises surprise, expostulation, and pain. Yet that which drew them to each other was signs of loveliness, signs of virtue: and these virtues are there, however eclipsed. They appear and reappear, and continue to attract; but the regard changes, quits the sign, and attaches to the substance. This repairs the wounded affection. Meantime, as life wears on, it proves a game of permutation and combination of all possible positions of the parties, to extort all the resources of each, and acquaint each with the whole strength and weakness of the other. For it is the nature and end of this relation, that they should represent the human race

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to each other. All that is in the world which is or ought to be known, is cunningly wrought into the texture of man, of woman.

“The person love does to us fit,
Like manna, has the taste of all in it.”

The world rolls: the circumstances vary every hour. All the angels that inhabit this temple of the body appear at the windows, and all the gnomes and vices also. By all the virtues they are united. If there be virtue, all the vices are known as such; they confess and flee. Their once flaming regard is sobered by time in either breast, and losing in violence what it gains in extent, it becomes a thorough good understanding. They resign each other, without complaint, to the good offices which man and woman are severally appointed to discharge in time; and exchange the passion, which once could not lose sight of its object, for a cheerful, disengaged furtherance, whether present or absent, of each other's designs. At last they discover that all which at first drew them together, —those once sacred features, that magical play of charms,—was deciduous, had a prospective end, like the scaffolding by which the house was built; and the purification of the intellect and the heart, from year to year, is the real marriage, foreseen and prepared from the first, and wholly above their consciousness. Looking at these aims, with which two persons, a man and a woman, so variously and correlatively gifted, are shut up in one house to spend in the nuptial society forty or fifty years, I do not wonder at the emphasis with which the heart prophesies this crisis from early infancy, at the profuse beauty with which the instincts deck the nuptial bower, and nature and intellect and art emulate each other in the gifts and the melody they bring to the epithalamium.

Thus are we put in training for a love which knows not sex, nor person, nor partiality, but which seeketh virtue and

wisdom everywhere, to the end of increasing virtue and wisdom. We are by nature observers, and thereby learners: that is our permanent state. But we are often made to feel that our affections are but tents of a night. Though slowly and with pain, the objects of the affections change, as the objects of thought do. There are moments when the affections rule and absorb the man, and make his happiness dependent on a person or persons. But in health the mind is presently seen again;—its overarching vault, bright with galaxies of immutable lights, and the warm loves and fears that swept over us as clouds, must lose their finite character, and blend with God, to attain their own perfection. But we need not fear that we can lose anything by the progress of the soul. The soul may be trusted to the end. That which is so beautiful and attractive as these relations, must be succeeded and supplanted only by what is more beautiful, and so on forever.

13 NAPOLEON; OR, THE MAN OF THE WORLD

Ralph Waldo Emerson

AMONG the eminent persons of the nineteenth century, Bonaparte is by far the best known, and the most powerful; and owes his predominance to the fidelity with which he expresses the tone of thought and belief, the aims of the masses of active and cultivated men. It is Swedenborg's theory, that every organ is made up of homogeneous particles; or, as it is sometimes expressed, every whole is made of similars; that is, the lungs are composed of infinitely small lungs; the liver, of infinitely small livers; the kidney, of little kidneys, etc. Following this analogy, if any man is found to carry with him the power and affections of vast numbers, if Napoleon is France, if Napoleon is Europe, it is because the people whom he sways are little Napoleons.

In our society, there is a standing antagonism between the conservative and the democratic classes; between those who have made their fortunes, and the young and the poor who have fortunes to make; between the interests of dead labor,—that is, the labor of hands long ago still in the grave, which labor is now entombed in money stocks, or in land and buildings owned by idle capitalists,—and the interests of living labor, which seeks to possess itself of land, and buildings, and money stocks. The first class is timid, selfish, illiberal, hating innovation, and continually losing numbers by death. The second class is selfish also, encroaching, bold, self-relying, always outnumbering the other, and recruiting its numbers every hour by births. It desires to keep open every avenue to the competition of all, and to multiply avenues;—the class of business men in America, in England, in France, and through-

out Europe; the class of industry and skill. Napoleon is its representative. The instinct of active, brave, able men, throughout the middle class everywhere, has pointed out Napoleon as the incarnate Democrat. He had their virtues and their vices; above all, he had their spirit or aim. That tendency is material, pointing at a sensual success, and employing the richest and most various means to that end; conversant with mechanical powers, highly intellectual, widely and accurately learned and skillful, but subordinating all intellectual and spiritual forces into means to a material success. To be the rich man is the end. "God has granted," says the Koran, "to every people a prophet in its own tongue." Paris, and London, and New York, the spirit of commerce, of money, and material power, were also to have their prophet; and Bonaparte was qualified and sent.

Every one of the million readers of anecdotes, or memoirs, or lives of Napoleon, delights in the page, because he studies in it his own history. Napoleon is thoroughly modern, and, at the highest point of his fortunes, has the very spirit of the newspapers. He is no saint,—to use his own word, "no capuchin,"—and he is no hero, in the high sense. The man in the street finds in him the qualities and powers of other men in the street. He finds him, like himself, by birth a citizen, who, by very intelligible merits, arrived at such a commanding position, that he could indulge all those tastes which the common man possesses, but is obliged to conceal and deny: good society, good books, fast traveling, dress, dinners, servants without number, personal weight, the execution of his ideas, the standing in the attitude of a benefactor to all persons about him, the refined enjoyments of pictures, statues, music, palaces, and conventional honors,—precisely what is agreeable to the heart of every man in the nineteenth century, this powerful man possessed.

It is true that a man of Napoleon's truth of adaptation to

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the mind of the masses around him, becomes not merely representative, but actually a monopolizer and usurper of other minds. Thus Mirabeau plagiarized every good thought, every good word, that was spoken in France. Dumont relates, that he sat in the gallery of the Convention, and heard Mirabeau make a speech. It struck Dumont that he could fit it with a peroration, which he wrote in pencil immediately, and showed it to Lord Elgin, who sat by him. Lord Elgin approved it, and Dumont, in the evening, showed it to Mirabeau. Mirabeau read it, pronounced it admirable, and declared he would incorporate it into his harangue to-morrow, to the Assembly. "It is impossible," said Dumont, "as, unfortunately, I have shown it to Lord Elgin." "If you have shown it to Lord Elgin, and to fifty persons beside, I shall still speak it to-morrow": and he did speak it, with much effect, at the next day's session. For Mirabeau, with his overpowering personality, felt that these things, which his presence inspired, were as much his own as if he had said them, and that his adoption of them gave them their weight. Much more absolute and centralizing was the successor to Mirabeau's popularity, and to much more than his predominance in France. Indeed, a man of Napoleon's stamp almost ceases to have a private speech and opinion. He is so largely receptive, and is so placed, that he comes to be a bureau for all the intelligence, wit, and power, of the age and country. He gains the battle; he makes the code; he makes the system of weights and measures; he levels the Alps; he builds the road. All distinguished engineers, savants, statisticians, report to him: so, likewise, do all good heads in every kind: he adopts the best measures, sets his stamp on them, and not these alone, but on every happy and memorable expression. Every sentence spoken by Napoleon, and every line of his writing, deserves reading, as it is the sense of France.

Bonaparte was the idol of common men, because he had in transcendent degree the qualities and powers of common men.

There is a certain satisfaction in coming down to the lowest ground of politics, for we get rid of cant and hypocrisy. Bonaparte wrought, in common with that great class he represented, for power and wealth,—but Bonaparte, specially, without any scruple as to the means. All the sentiments which embarrass men's pursuit of these objects, he set aside. The sentiments were for women and children. Fontanes, in 1804, expressed Napoleon's own sense, when, in behalf of the Senate, he addressed him,—“Sire, the desire of perfection is the worst disease that ever afflicted the human mind.” The advocates of liberty, and of progress, are “ideologists”;—a word of contempt often in his mouth;—“Necker is an ideologist”: “Lafayette is an ideologist.”

An Italian proverb, too well known, declares that, “if you would succeed, you must not be too good.” It is an advantage, within certain limits, to have renounced the dominion of the sentiments of piety, gratitude, and generosity; since, what was an impassable bar to us, and still is to others, becomes a convenient weapon for our purposes; just as the river which was a formidable barrier, winter transforms into the smoothest of roads.

Napoleon renounced, once for all, sentiments and affections, and would help himself with his hands and his head. With him is no miracle, and no magic. He is a worker in brass, in iron, in wood, in earth, in roads, in buildings, in money, and in troops, and a very consistent and wise master-workman. He is never weak and literary, but acts with the solidity and the precision of natural agents. He has not lost his native sense and sympathy with things. Men give way before such a man, as before natural events. To be sure, there are men enough who are immersed in things, as farmers, smiths, sailors, and mechanics generally; and we know how real and solid such men appear in the presence of scholars and grammarians: but these men ordinarily lack the power of arrangement, and are like

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hands without a head. But Bonaparte superadded to this mineral and animal force, insight and generalization, so that men saw in him combined the natural and the intellectual power, as if the sea and land had taken flesh and begun to cipher. Therefore the land and sea seem to presuppose him. He came unto his own and they received him. This ciphering operative knows what he is working with, and what is the product. He knew the properties of gold and iron, of wheels and ships, of troops and diplomatists, and required that each should do after its kind.

The art of war was the game in which he exerted his arithmetic. It consisted, according to him, in having always more forces than the enemy, on the point where the enemy is attacked, or where he attacks: and his whole talent is strained by endless maneuver and evolution, to march always on the enemy at an angle, and destroy his forces in detail. It is obvious that a very small force, skillfully and rapidly maneuvering, so as always to bring two men against one at the point of engagement, will be an overmatch for a much larger body of men.

The times, his constitution, and his early circumstances combined to develop this pattern democrat. He had the virtues of his class, and the conditions for their activity. That common sense, which no sooner respects any end, than it finds the means to effect it; the delight in the use of means; in the choice, simplification, and combining of means; the directness and thoroughness of his work; the prudence with which all was seen, and the energy with which all was done, make him the natural organ and head of what I may almost call, from its extent, the *modern* party.

Nature must have far the greatest share in every success, and so in his. Such a man was wanted, and such a man was born; a man of stone and iron, capable of sitting on horseback sixteen or seventeen hours, of going many days together without

rest or food, except by snatches, and with the speed and spring of a tiger in action; a man not embarrassed by any scruples; compact, instant, selfish, prudent, and of a perception which did not suffer itself to be balked or misled by any pretenses of others, or any superstition, or any heat or haste of his own. "My hand of iron," he said, "was not at the extremity of my arm: it was immediately connected with my head." He respected the power of nature and fortune, and ascribed to it his superiority, instead of valuing himself, like inferior men, on his opinionativeness, and waging war with nature. His favorite rhetoric lay in allusion to his star; and he pleased himself, as well as the people, when he styled himself the "Child of Destiny." "They charge me," he said, "with the commission of great crimes: men of my stamp do not commit crimes. Nothing has been more simple than my elevation: 'tis in vain to ascribe it to intrigue or crime: it was owing to the peculiarity of the times, and to my reputation of having fought well against the enemies of my country. I have always marched with the opinion of great masses, and with events. Of what use, then, would crimes be to me?" Again he said, speaking of his son, "My son cannot replace me. I could not replace myself. I am the creature of circumstances."

He had a directness of action never before combined with so much comprehension. He is a realist, terrific to all talkers, and confused truth-obscuring persons. He sees where the matter hinges, throws himself on the precise point of resistance, and slights all other considerations. He is strong in the right manner, namely, by insight. He never blundered into victory, but won his battles in his head, before he won them on the field. His principal means are in himself. He asks counsel of no other. In 1796, he writes to the Directory: "I have conducted the campaign without consulting anyone. I should have done no good, if I had been under the necessity of conforming to the notions of another person. I have gained

some advantages over superior forces, and when totally destitute of everything, because, in the persuasion that your confidence was reposed in me, my actions were as prompt as my thoughts."

History is full, down to this day, of the imbecility of kings and governors. They are a class of persons much to be pitied, for they know not what they should do. The weavers strike for bread; and the king and his ministers, not knowing what to do, meet them with bayonets. But Napoleon understood his business. Here was a man who, in each moment and emergency, knew what to do next. It is an immense comfort and refreshment to the spirits, not only of kings, but of citizens. Few men have any next; they live from hand to mouth, without plan, and are ever at the end of their line, and, after each action, wait for an impulse from abroad. Napoleon had been the first man of the world, if his ends had been purely public. As he is, he inspires confidence and vigor by the extraordinary unity of his action. He is firm, sure, self-denying, self-postponing, sacrificing everything,—money, troops, generals, and his own safety also, to his aim; not misled, like common adventurers, by the splendor of his own means. "Incidents ought not to govern policy," he said, "but policy, incidents." "To be hurried away by every event, is to have no political system at all." His victories were only so many doors, and he never for a moment lost sight of his way onward, in the dazzle and uproar of the present circumstance. He knew what to do, and he flew to his mark. He would shorten a straight line to come at his object. Horrible anecdotes may, no doubt, be collected from his history, of the price at which he bought his successes; but he must not therefore be set down as cruel; but only as one who knew no impediment to his will; not bloodthirsty, not cruel,—but woe to what thing or person stood in his way! Not bloodthirsty, but not sparing of blood,—and pitiless. He saw only the object: the obstacle must give way. "Sire, General Clarke cannot combine with General

Junot, for the dreadful fire of the Austrian battery.”—“Let him carry the battery.”—“Sire, every regiment that approaches the heavy artillery is sacrificed: Sire, what orders?”—“Forward, forward!” Seruzier, a colonel of artillery, gives, in his *Military Memoirs*, the following sketch of a scene after the battle of Austerlitz.—“At the moment in which the Russian army was making its retreat, painfully, but in good order, on the ice of the lake, the Emperor Napoleon came riding at full speed toward the artillery. ‘You are losing time,’ he cried; ‘fire upon those masses; they must be engulfed: fire upon the ice!’ The order remained unexecuted for ten minutes. In vain several officers and myself were placed on the slope of a hill to produce the effect: their balls and mine rolled upon the ice, without breaking it up. Seeing that, I tried a simple method of elevating light howitzers. The almost perpendicular fall of the heavy projectiles produced the desired effect. My method was immediately followed by the adjoining batteries, and in less than no time we buried” some¹ “thousands of Russians and Austrians under the waters of the lake.”

In the plenitude of his resources, every obstacle seemed to vanish. “There shall be no Alps,” he said; and he built his perfect roads, climbing by graded galleries their steepest precipices, until Italy was as open to Paris as any town in France. He laid his bones to, and wrought for his crown. Having decided what was to be done, he did that with might and main. He put out all his strength. He risked everything, and spared nothing, neither ammunition, nor money, nor troops, nor generals, nor himself.

We like to see everything do its office after its kind, whether it be a milch-cow or a rattlesnake; and, if fighting be the best mode of adjusting national differences (as large majorities of men seem to agree), certainly Bonaparte was right in making

¹ As I quote at second hand, and cannot procure Seruzier, I dare not adopt the high figure I find. [Author's note.]

it thorough. "The grand principle of war," he said, "was, that an army ought always to be ready, by day and by night, and at all hours, to make all the resistance it is capable of making." He never economized his ammunition, but, on a hostile position, rained a torrent of iron,—shells, balls, grape-shot,—to annihilate all defense. On any point of resistance, he concentrated squadron on squadron in overwhelming numbers, until it was swept out of existence. To a regiment of horse-chasseurs at Lobenstein, two days before the battle of Jena, Napoleon said, "My lads, you must not fear death; when soldiers brave death, they drive him into the enemy's ranks." In the fury of assault, he no more spared himself. He went to the edge of his possibility. It is plain that in Italy he did what he could, and all that he could. He came, several times, within an inch of ruin; and his own person was all but lost. He was flung into the marsh at Arcola. The Austrians were between him and his troops, in the *mêlée*, and he was brought off with desperate efforts. At Lonato, and at other places, he was on the point of being taken prisoner. He fought sixty battles. He had never enough. Each victory was a new weapon. "My power would fall, were I not to support it by new achievements. Conquest has made me what I am, and conquest must maintain me." He felt, with every wise man, that as much life is needed for conservation, as for creation. We are always in peril, always in a bad plight, just on the edge of destruction, and only to be saved by invention and courage.

This vigor was guarded and tempered by the coldest prudence and punctuality. A thunderbolt in the attack, he was found invulnerable in his intrenchments. His very attack was never the inspiration of courage, but the result of calculation. His idea of the best defense consists in being still the attacking party. "My ambition," he says, "was great, but was of a cold nature." In one of his conversations with Las Cases, he remarked, "As to moral courage, I have rarely met with the two-

o'clock-in-the-morning kind: I mean unprepared courage, that which is necessary on an unexpected occasion; and which, in spite of the most unforeseen events, leaves full freedom of judgment and decision": and he did not hesitate to declare that he was himself eminently endowed with this "two-o'clock-in-the-morning courage, and that he had met with few persons equal to himself in this respect."

Everything depended on the nicety of his combinations, and the stars were not more punctual than his arithmetic. His personal attention descended to the smallest particulars. "At Montebello, I ordered Kellermann to attack with eight hundred horse, and with these he separated the six thousand Hungarian grenadiers, before the very eyes of the Austrian cavalry. This cavalry was half a league off, and required a quarter of an hour to arrive on the field of action; and I have observed, that it is always these quarters of an hour that decide the fate of a battle." "Before he fought a battle, Bonaparte thought little about what he should do in case of success, but a great deal about what he should do in case of a reverse of fortune." The same prudence and good sense mark all his behavior. His instructions to his secretary at the Tuileries are worth remembering. "During the night, enter my chamber as seldom as possible. Do not awake me when you have any good news to communicate; with that there is no hurry. But when you bring bad news, rouse me instantly, for then there is not a moment to be lost." It was a whimsical economy of the same kind which dictated his practice, when general in Italy, in regard to his burdensome correspondence. He directed Bourrienne to leave all letters unopened for three weeks, and then observed with satisfaction how large a part of the correspondence had thus disposed of itself, and no longer required an answer. His achievement of business was immense, and enlarges the known powers of man. There have been many

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working kings, from Ulysses to William of Orange, but none who accomplished a tithe of this man's performance.

To these gifts of nature, Napoleon added the advantage of having been born to a private and humble fortune.¹ In his later days, he had the weakness of wishing to add to his crowns and badges the prescription of aristocracy: but he knew his debt to his austere education, and made no secret of his contempt for the born kings, and for "the hereditary asses," as he coarsely styled the Bourbons. He said that, "in their exile, they have learned nothing and forgot nothing." Bonaparte had passed through all the degrees of military service, but also was citizen before he was emperor, and so has the key to citizenship. His remarks and estimates discover the information and justness of measurement of the middle class. Those who had to deal with him, found that he was not to be imposed upon, but could cipher as well as another man. This appears in all parts of his Memoirs, dictated at St. Helena. When the expenses of the empress, of his household, of his palaces, had accumulated great debts, Napoleon examined the bills of the creditors himself, detected overcharges and errors, and reduced the claims by considerable sums.

His grand weapon, namely, the millions whom he directed, he owed to the representative character which clothed him. He interests us as he stands for France and for Europe; and he exists as captain and king only as far as the revolution, or the interest of the industrious masses, found an organ and a leader in him. In the social interests, he knew the meaning and value of labor, and threw himself naturally on that side. I like an incident mentioned by one of his biographers at St. Helena. "When walking with Mrs. Balcombe, some servants, carrying heavy boxes, passed by on the road, and Mrs. Balcombe desired them, in rather an angry tone, to keep back. Napoleon

¹ Of interest in this connection is the passage from Emerson reprinted below, pp. 393f.

interfered, saying, 'Respect the burden, Madam.'" In the time of the Empire, he directed attention to the improvement and embellishment of the markets of the capital. "The market-place," he said, "is the Louvre of the common people." The principal works that have survived him are his magnificent roads. He filled the troops with his spirit, and a sort of freedom and companionship grew up between him and them, which the forms of his court never permitted between the officers and himself. They performed, under his eye, that which no others could do. The best document of his relation to his troops is the order of the day on the morning of the battle of Austerlitz, in which Napoleon promises the troops that he will keep his person out of reach of fire. This declaration, which is the reverse of that ordinarily made by generals and sovereigns on the eve of a battle, sufficiently explains the devotion of the army to their leader.¹

But though there is in particulars this identity between Napoleon and the mass of the people, his real strength lay in their conviction that he was their representative in his genius and aims, not only when he courted, but when he controlled, and even when he decimated them by his conscriptions. He knew, as well as any Jacobin in France, how to philosophize on liberty and equality; and, when allusion was made to the precious blood of centuries, which was spilled by the killing of the Duc d'Enghien, he suggested, "Neither is my blood ditch-water." The people felt that no longer the throne was occupied, and the land sucked of its nourishment, by a small class of legitimates, secluded from all community with the children of the soil, and holding the ideas and superstitions of a long-forgotten state of society. Instead of that vampire, a man of themselves held, in the Tuileries, knowledge and ideas like their own, opening, of course, to them and their children, all

¹ Browning's *Incident of the French Camp* is an imaginary example of this devotion. See *Poetry*, p. 3.

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places of power and trust. The day of sleepy, selfish policy, ever narrowing the means and opportunities of young men, was ended, and a day of expansion and demand was come. A market for all the powers and productions of man was opened; brilliant prizes glittered in the eyes of youth and talent. The old, iron-bound, feudal France was changed into a young Ohio or New York; and those who smarted under the immediate rigors of the new monarch, pardoned them, as the necessary severities of the military system which had driven out the oppressor. And even when the majority of the people had begun to ask, whether they had really gained anything under the exhausting levies of men and money of the new master,—the whole talent of the country, in every rank and kindred, took his part, and defended him as its natural patron. In 1814, when advised to rely on the higher classes, Napoleon said to those around him, "Gentlemen, in the situation in which I stand, my only nobility is the rabble of the Faubourgs."

Napoleon met this natural expectation. The necessity of his position required a hospitality to every sort of talent, and its appointment to trusts; and his feeling went along with this policy. Like every superior person, he undoubtedly felt a desire for men and compeers, and a wish to measure his power with other masters, and an impatience of fools and underlings. In Italy, he sought for men, and found none. "Good God!" he said, "how rare men are! There are eighteen millions in Italy, and I have with difficulty found two,—Dandolo and Melzi." In later years, with larger experience, his respect for mankind was not increased. In a moment of bitterness, he said, to one of his oldest friends: "Men deserve the contempt with which they inspire me. I have only to put some gold-lace on the coat of my virtuous republicans, and they immediately become just what I wish them." This impatience at levity was, however, an oblique tribute of respect to those able persons who commanded his regard, not only when he found them

friends and coadjutors, but also when they resisted his will. He could not confound Fox and Pitt, Carnot, Lafayette, and Bernadotte, with the dangles of his court; and, in spite of the detraction which his systematic egotism dictated toward the great captains who conquered with and for him, ample acknowledgments are made by him to Lannes, Duroc, Kléber, Dessaix, Masséna, Murat, Ney, and Augereau. If he felt himself their patron, and the founder of their fortunes, as when he said, "I made my generals out of mud," he could not hide his satisfaction in receiving from them a seconding and support commensurate with the grandeur of his enterprise. In the Russian campaign, he was so much impressed by the courage and resources of Marshal Ney, that he said, "I have two hundred millions in my coffers, and I would give them all for Ney." The characters which he has drawn of several of his marshals are discriminating, and, though they did not content the insatiable vanity of French officers, are, no doubt, substantially just. And, in fact, every species of merit was sought and advanced under his government. "I know," he said, "the depth and draught of water of every one of my generals." Natural power was sure to be well received at his court. Seventeen men, in his time, were raised from common soldiers to the rank of king, marshal, duke, or general; and the crosses of his Legion of Honor were given to personal valor, and not to family connection. "When soldiers have been baptized in the fire of a battle-field, they have all one rank in my eyes."

When a natural king becomes a titular king, everybody is pleased and satisfied. The Revolution entitled the strong populace of the Faubourg St.-Antoine, and every horse-boy and powder-monkey in the army, to look on Napoleon, as flesh of his flesh, and the creature of *his* party; but there is something in the success of grand talent which enlists a universal sympathy. For, in the prevalence of sense and spirit over stupidity and malversation, all reasonable men have an

interest; and, as intellectual beings, we feel the air purified by the electric shock, when material force is overthrown by intellectual energies. As soon as we are removed out of the reach of local and accidental partialities, man feels that Napoleon fights for him; these are honest victories; this strong steam-engine does our work. Whatever appeals to the imagination, by transcending the ordinary limits of human ability, wonderfully encourages and liberates us. This capacious head, revolving and disposing sovereignly trains of affairs, and animating such multitudes of agents; this eye, which looked through Europe; this prompt invention; this inexhaustible resource;—what events! what romantic pictures! what strange situations!—when spying the Alps, by a sunset in the Sicilian sea; drawing up his army for battle, in sight of the Pyramids, and saying to his troops, “From the tops of those pyramids, forty centuries look down on you”; fording the Red Sea; wading in the gulf of the Isthmus of Suez. On the shore of Ptolemais, gigantic projects agitated him. “Had Acre fallen, I should have changed the face of the world.” His army, on the night of the battle of Austerlitz, which was the anniversary of his inauguration as Emperor, presented him with a bouquet of forty standards taken in the fight. Perhaps it is a little puerile, the pleasure he took in making these contrasts glaring; as, when he pleased himself with making kings wait in his antechambers, at Tilsit, at Paris, and at Erfurt.

We cannot, in the universal imbecility, indecision, and indolence of men, sufficiently congratulate ourselves on this strong and ready actor, who took occasion by the beard, and showed us how much may be accomplished by the mere force of such virtues as all men possess in less degrees; namely, by punctuality, by personal attention, by courage, and thoroughness. “The Austrians,” he said, “do not know the value of time.” I should cite him, in his earlier years, as a model of prudence. His power does not consist in any wild or extravagant force; in

any enthusiasm, like Mahomet's; or singular power of persuasion; but in the exercise of common sense on each emergency, instead of abiding by rules and customs. The lesson he teaches is that which vigor always teaches,—that there is always room for it. To what heaps of cowardly doubts is not that man's life an answer. When he appeared, it was the belief of all military men that there could be nothing new in war; as it is the belief of men to-day, that nothing new can be undertaken in politics, or in church, or in letters, or in trade, or in farming, or in our social manners and customs; and as it is, at all times, the belief of society that the world is used up. But Bonaparte knew better than society; and, moreover, knew that he knew better. I think all men know better than they do; know that the institutions we so volubly commend are go-carts and baubles; but they dare not trust their presentiments. Bonaparte relied on his own sense, and did not care a bean for other people's. The world treated his novelties just as it treats everybody's novelties,—made infinite objection; mustered all the impediments: but he snapped his finger at their objections. "What creates great difficulty," he remarks, "in the profession of the land-commander, is the necessity of feeding so many men and animals. If he allows himself to be guided by the commissaries, he will never stir, and all his expeditions will fail." An example of his common sense is what he says of the passage of the Alps in winter, which all writers, one repeating after the other, had described as impracticable. "The winter," says Napoleon, "is not the most unfavorable season for the passage of lofty mountains. The snow is then firm, the weather settled, and there is nothing to fear from avalanches, the real and only danger to be apprehended in the Alps. On those high mountains, there are often very fine days in December, of a dry cold, with extreme calmness in the air." Read his account, too, of the way in which battles are gained. "In all battles, a moment occurs when the bravest troops, after having

made the greatest efforts, feel inclined to run. That terror proceeds from a want of confidence in their own courage; and it only requires a slight opportunity, a pretense, to restore confidence to them. The art is to give rise to the opportunity, and to invent the pretense. At Arcola, I won the battle with twenty-five horsemen. I seized the moment of lassitude, gave every man a trumpet, and gained the day with this handful. You see that two armies are two bodies which meet, and endeavor to frighten each other: a moment of panic occurs, and that moment must be turned to advantage. When a man has been present in many actions, he distinguishes that moment without difficulty: it is as easy as casting up an addition."

This deputy of the nineteenth century added to his gifts a capacity for speculation on general topics. He delighted in running through the range of practical, of literary, and of abstract questions. His opinion is always original, and to the purpose. On the voyage to Egypt, he liked, after dinner, to fix on three or four persons to support a proposition, and as many to oppose it. He gave a subject, and the discussions turned on questions of religion, the different kinds of government, and the art of war. One day, he asked, whether the planets were inhabited? On another, what was the age of the world? Then he proposed to consider the probability of the destruction of the globe, either by water or by fire: at another time, the truth or fallacy of presentiments, and the interpretation of dreams. He was very fond of talking of religion. In 1806, he conversed with Fournier, Bishop of Montpellier, on matters of theology. There were two points on which they could not agree, *viz.*, that of hell, and that of salvation out of the pale of the church. The Emperor told Josephine, that he disputed like a devil on these two points, on which the Bishop was inexorable. To the philosophers he readily yielded all that was proved against religion as the work of men and time; but he would not hear of materialism. One fine night, on

deck, amid a clatter of materialism, Bonaparte pointed to the stars, and said, "You may talk as long as you please, gentlemen, but who made all that?" He delighted in the conversation of men of science, particularly of Monge and Berthollet; but the men of letters he slighted; "they are manufacturers of phrases." Of medicine, too, he was fond of talking, and with those of its practitioners whom he most esteemed,—with Corvisart at Paris, and with Antommarchi at St. Helena. "Believe me," he said to the last, "we had better leave off all these remedies: life is a fortress which neither you nor I know anything about. Why throw obstacles in the way of its defense? Its own means are superior to all the apparatus of your laboratories. Corvisart candidly agreed with me, that all your filthy mixtures are good for nothing. Medicine is a collection of uncertain prescriptions, the results of which, taken collectively, are more fatal than useful to mankind. Water, air, and cleanliness are the chief articles in my pharmacopœia."

His memoirs, dictated to Count Montholon and General Gourgaud, at St. Helena, have great value, after all the deduction that, it seems, is to be made from them, on account of his known disingenuousness. He has the good-nature of strength and conscious superiority. I admire his simple, clear narrative of his battles; good as Cæsar's; his good-natured and sufficiently respectful account of Marshal Wurmser and his other antagonists, and his own equality as a writer to his varying subject. The most agreeable portion is the Campaign in Egypt.

He had hours of thought and wisdom. In intervals of leisure, either in the camp or the palace, Napoleon appears as a man of genius, directing on abstract questions the native appetite for truth, and the impatience of words, he was wont to show in war. He could enjoy every play of invention, a romance, a *bon mot*, as well as a stratagem in a campaign. He delighted to fascinate Josephine and her ladies, in a dim-lighted

apartment, by the terrors of a fiction, to which his voice and dramatic power lent every addition.

I call Napoleon the agent or attorney of the middle class of modern society; of the throng who fill the markets, shops, counting-houses, manufactories, ships, of the modern world, aiming to be rich. He was the agitator, the destroyer of prescription, the internal improver, the liberal, the radical, the inventor of means, the opener of doors and markets, the subverter of monopoly and abuse. Of course, the rich and aristocratic did not like him. England, the center of capital, and Rome and Austria, centers of tradition and genealogy, opposed him. The consternation of the dull and conservative classes, the terror of the foolish old men and old women of the Roman conclave,—who in their despair took hold of anything, and would cling to red-hot iron,—the vain attempts of statists to abuse and deceive him, of the Emperor of Austria to bribe him; and the instinct of the young, ardent, and active men, everywhere, which pointed him out as the giant of the middle class, make his history bright and commanding. He had the virtues of the masses of his constituents: he had also their vices. I am sorry that the brilliant picture has its reverse. But that is the fatal quality which we discover in our pursuit of wealth, that it is treacherous, and is bought by the breaking or weakening of the sentiments; and it is inevitable that we should find the same fact in the history of this champion, who proposed to himself simply a brilliant career, without any stipulation or scruple concerning the means.

Bonaparte was singularly destitute of generous sentiments. The highest-placed individual in the most cultivated age and population of the world,—he has not the merit of common truth and honesty. He is unjust to his generals; egotistic, and monopolizing; meanly stealing the credit of their great actions from Kellermann, from Bernadotte, intriguing to involve his faithful Junot in hopeless bankruptcy, in order to drive him

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to a distance from Paris, because the familiarity of his manners offends the new pride of his throne. He is a boundless liar. The official paper, his *Moniteur*, and all his bulletins, are proverbs for saying what he wished to be believed; and worse,—he sat, in his premature old age, in his lonely island, coldly falsifying facts, and dates, and characters, and giving to history a theatrical *éclat*. Like all Frenchmen, he has a passion for stage effect. Every action that breathes of generosity is poisoned by this calculation. His star, his love of glory, his doctrine of the immortality of the soul, are all French. “I must dazzle and astonish. If I were to give the liberty of the press, my power could not last three days.” To make a great noise is his favorite design. “A great reputation is a great noise: the more there is made, the farther off it is heard. Laws, institutions, monuments, nations, all fall; but the noise continues, and resounds in after ages.” His doctrine of immortality is simply fame. His theory of influence is not flattering. “There are two levers for moving men,—interest and fear. Love is a silly infatuation, depend upon it. Friendship is but a name. I love nobody. I do not even love my brothers: perhaps Joseph, a little, from habit, and because he is my elder; and Duroc, I love him too; but why?—because his character pleases me: he is stern and resolute, and, I believe, the fellow never shed a tear. For my part, I know very well that I have no true friends. As long as I continue to be what I am, I may have as many pretended friends as I please. Leave sensibility to women: but men should be firm in heart and purpose, or they should have nothing to do with war and government.” He was thoroughly unscrupulous. He would steal, slander, assassinate, drown, and poison, as his interest dictated. He had no generosity, but mere vulgar hatred; he was intensely selfish; he was perfidious; he cheated at cards; he was a prodigious gossip, and opened letters, and delighted in his infamous police, and rubbed his hands with joy when he

had intercepted some morsel of intelligence concerning the men and women about him, boasting that "he knew everything"; and interfered with the cutting of the dresses of the women; and listened after the hurrahs and the compliments of the street, *incognito*. His manners were coarse. He treated women with low familiarity. He had the habit of pulling their ears, and pinching their cheeks, when he was in good-humor, and of pulling the ears and whiskers of men, and of striking and horse-play with them, to his last days. It does not appear that he listened at keyholes, or, at least, that he was caught at it. In short, when you have penetrated through all the circles of power and splendor, you were not dealing with a gentleman, at last; but with an impostor and a rogue: and he fully deserves the epithet of *Jupiter Scapin*, or a sort of Scamp Jupiter.

In describing the two parties into which modern society divides itself,—the democrat and the conservative,—I said, Bonaparte represents the democrat, or the party of men of business, against the stationary or conservative party. I omitted then to say, what is material to the statement, namely, that these two parties differ only as young and old. The democrat is a young conservative; the conservative is an old democrat. The aristocrat is the democrat ripe, and gone to seed,—because both parties stand on the one ground of the supreme value of property, which one endeavors to get, and the other to keep. Bonaparte may be said to represent the whole history of this party, its youth and its age; yes, and with poetic justice, its fate, in his own. The counter-revolution, the counter-party, still waits for its organ and representative, in a lover and a man of truly public and universal aims.

Here was an experiment, under the most favorable conditions, of the powers of intellect without conscience. Never was such a leader so endowed, and so weaponed; never leader found

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such aids and followers. And what was the result of this vast talent and power, of these immense armies, burned cities, squandered treasures, immolated millions of men, of this demoralized Europe? It came to no result. All passed away, like the smoke of his artillery, and left no trace. He left France smaller, poorer, feebler, than he found it; and the whole contest for freedom was to be begun again. The attempt was, in principle, suicidal. France served him with life, and limb, and estate, as long as it could identify its interest with him; but when men saw that after victory was another war; after the destruction of armies, new conscriptions; and they who had toiled so desperately were never nearer to the reward,—they could not spend what they had earned, nor repose on their down-beds, nor strut in their châteaux,—they deserted him. Men found that his absorbing egotism was deadly to all other men. It resembled the torpedo, which inflicts a succession of shocks on anyone who takes hold of it, producing spasms which contract the muscles of the hand, so that the man cannot open his fingers; and the animal inflicts new and more violent shocks, until he paralyzes and kills his victim. So, this exorbitant egotist narrowed, impoverished, and absorbed the power and existence of those who served him; and the universal cry of France, and of Europe, in 1814, was, “enough of him”: “*assez de Bonaparte.*”

It was not Bonaparte's fault. He did all that in him lay, to live and thrive without moral principle. It was the nature of things, the eternal law of man and of the world, which balked and ruined him; and the result, in a million experiments, would be the same. Every experiment, by multitudes or by individuals, that has a sensual and selfish aim, will fail. The pacific Fourier¹ will be as inefficient as the pernicious Napoleon. As long as our civilization is essentially one of

¹ A French social philosopher chiefly remembered for his communistic schemes.

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property, of fences, of exclusiveness, it will be mocked by delusions. Our riches will leave us sick; there will be bitterness in our laughter; and our wine will burn our mouth. Only that good profits, which we can taste with all doors open, and which serves all men.

14 MY FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH POETS

William Hazlitt

MY father was a Dissenting minister at Wem, in Shropshire, and in the year 1798 (the figures that compose the date are to me like the "dreaded name of Demogorgon") Mr. Coleridge came to Shrewsbury to succeed Mr. Rowe in the spiritual charge of a Unitarian congregation there. He did not come till late on the Saturday afternoon before he was to preach, and Mr. Rowe, who himself went down to the coach in a state of anxiety and expectation to look for the arrival of his successor, could find no one at all answering the description but a round-faced man in a short black coat (like a shooting-jacket) which hardly seemed to have been made for him, but who seemed to be talking at a great rate to his fellow-passengers. Mr. Rowe had scarce returned to give an account of his disappointment when the round-faced man in black entered, and dissipated all doubts on the subject by beginning to talk. He did not cease while he stayed, nor has he since, that I know of. He held the good town of Shrewsbury in delightful suspense for three weeks that he remained there, "fluttering the *proud Salopians* like an eagle in a dove-cote";¹ and the Welsh mountains that skirt the horizon with their tempestuous confusion agree to have heard no such mystic sounds since the days of

"High-born Hoel's harp or soft Llewellyn's lay."

As we passed along between Wem and Shrewsbury, and I eyed their blue tops seen through the wintry branches, or the red rustling leaves of the sturdy oak-trees by the roadside, a sound

¹ Adaptation of a passage in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* (Act V, Scene VI). The "Salopians" are the inhabitants of Salop, or Shropshire, the county in which Wem and Shrewsbury are situated.

was in my ears as of a Siren's song; I was stunned, startled with it, as from deep sleep; but I had no notion then that I should ever be able to express my admiration to others in motley imagery or quaint allusion, till the light of his genius shone into my soul, like the sun's rays glittering in the puddles of the road. I was at that time dumb, inarticulate, helpless, like a worm by the wayside, crushed, bleeding, lifeless; but now, bursting the deadly bands that

"bound them,
"With Styx nine times round them,"

my ideas float on winged words, and as they expand their plumes, catch the golden light of other years. My soul has indeed remained in its original bondage, dark, obscure, with longings infinite and unsatisfied; my heart, shut up in the prison-house of this rude clay, has never found, nor will it ever find, a heart to speak to; but that my understanding also did not remain dumb and brutish, or at length found a language to express itself, I owe to Coleridge. But this is not to my purpose.

My father lived ten miles from Shrewsbury, and was in the habit of exchanging visits with Mr. Rowe, and with Mr. Jenkins, of Whitchurch (nine miles further on), according to the custom of Dissenting ministers in each other's neighborhood. A line of communication is thus established, by which the flame of civil and religious liberty is kept alive, and nourishes its smoldering fire unquenchable, like the fires in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, placed at different stations, that waited for ten long years to announce with their blazing pyramids the destruction of Troy. Coleridge had agreed to come over and see my father, according to the courtesy of the country, as Mr. Rowe's probable successor; but, in the meantime, I had gone to hear him preach the Sunday after his arrival. A poet and a philosopher getting up into a Unitarian

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pulpit to preach the Gospel was a romance in these degenerate days, a sort of revival of the primitive spirit of Christianity which was not to be resisted.

It was in January of 1798 that I rose one morning before daylight, to walk ten miles in the mud to hear this celebrated person preach. Never, the longest day I have to live, shall I have such another walk as this cold, raw, comfortless one, in the winter of the year 1798. *Il y a des impressions que ni le temps ni les circonstances ne peuvent effacer. Dussé-je vivre des siècles entiers, le doux temps de ma jeunesse ne peut renaître pour moi, ni s'effacer jamais de ma mémoire.*¹ When I got there the organ was playing the 100th Psalm, and when it was done Mr. Coleridge rose and gave out his text, "And he went up into the mountain to pray, HIMSELF, ALONE." As he gave out this text his voice "rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes," and when he came to the two last words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe. The idea of St. John came into my mind, "of one crying in the wilderness, who had his loins girt about, and whose food was locusts and wild honey." The preacher then launched into his subject like an eagle dallying with the wind. The sermon was upon peace and war; upon church and state—not their alliance, but their separation—on the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christianity, not as the same, but as opposed to one another. He talked of those who had "inscribed the cross of Christ on banners dripping with human gore." He made a poetical and pastoral excursion—and to show the fatal effects of war, drew a striking contrast between the simple shepherd-boy, driving his team afield, or sitting under the hawthorn, piping to his flock, "as though he

¹ There are impressions which neither time nor circumstance can efface. Were I to live whole centuries, the sweet time of my youth could not be born for me again, nor ever be effaced from out my memory.

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should never be old," and the same poor country lad, crimped,¹ kidnapped, brought into town, made drunk at an alehouse, turned into a wretched drummer-boy, with his hair sticking on end with powder and pomatum, a long cue at his back, and tricked out in the loathsome finery of the profession of blood:

"Such were the notes our once-loved poet sung."

And for myself, I could not have been more delighted if I had heard the music of the spheres. Poetry and Philosophy had met together. Truth and Genius had embraced, under the eye and with the sanction of Religion. This was even beyond my hopes. I returned home well satisfied. The sun that was still laboring pale and wan through the sky, obscured by thick mists, seemed an emblem of the *good cause*; and the cold, dank drops of dew that hung half melted on the beard of the thistle had something genial and refreshing in them; for there was a spirit of hope and youth in all nature that turned everything into good. The face of nature had not then the brand of *Jus DIVINUM* ² on it:

"Like to that sanguine flower, inscrib'd with woe."

On the Tuesday following the half-inspired speaker came. I was called down into the room where he was, and went half-hoping, half-afraid. He received me very graciously, and I listened for a long time without uttering a word. I did not suffer in his opinion by my silence. "For those two hours," he afterwards was pleased to say, "he was conversing with William Hazlitt's forehead!" His appearance was different from what I had anticipated from seeing him before. At a distance, and in the dim light of the chapel, there was to me a strange wildness in his aspect, a dusky obscurity, and I thought him

¹ Entrapped and forced to serve in the army or navy.

² "Divine right." Hazlitt's sympathies were with the French Revolution and its political ideals.

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pitted with the small-pox. His complexion was at that time clear, and even bright—

“As are the children of yon azure sheen.”

His forehead was broad and high, light as if built of ivory, with large projecting eyebrows, and his eyes rolling beneath them, like a sea with darkened luster. “A certain tender bloom his face o’erspread,” a purple tinge as we see it in the pale thoughtful complexions of the Spanish portrait-painters, Murillo and Velásquez. His mouth was gross, voluptuous, open, eloquent; his chin good-humored and round; but his nose, the rudder of the face, the index of the will, was small, feeble, nothing—like what he has done. It might seem that the genius of his face as from a height surveyed and projected him (with sufficient capacity and huge aspiration) into the world unknown of thought and imagination, with nothing to support or guide his veering purpose, as if Columbus had launched his adventurous course for the New World in a scallop, without oars or compass. So, at least, I comment on it after the event. Coleridge, in his person, was rather above the common size, inclining to the corpulent, or like Lord Hamlet, “somewhat fat and porsy.”¹ His hair (now, alas! gray) was then black and glossy as the raven’s, and fell in smooth masses over his forehead. This long pendulous hair is peculiar to enthusiasts, to those whose minds tend heavenward, and is traditionally inseparable (though of a different color) from the pictures of Christ. It ought to belong, as a character, to all who preach *Christ crucified*, and Coleridge was at that time one of those!

It was curious to observe the contrast between him and my father, who was a veteran in the cause, and then declining into the vale of years. He had been a poor Irish lad, carefully brought up by his parents, and sent to the University of

¹ Inaccurately remembered. Hamlet’s mother speaks of him, during the fencing bout, as “fat and scant of breath.”

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Glasgow (where he studied under Adam Smith) to prepare him for his future destination. It was his mother's proudest wish to see her son a Dissenting minister. So, if we look back to past generations (as far as eye can reach), we see the same hopes, fears, wishes, followed by the same disappointments, throbbing in the human heart; and so we may see them (if we look forward) rising up forever, and disappearing, like vaporish bubbles, in the human breast! After being tossed about from congregation to congregation in the heats of the Unitarian controversy, and squabbles about the American war, he had been relegated to an obscure village, where he was to spend the last thirty years of his life, far from the only converse that he loved, the talk about disputed texts of Scripture, and the cause of civil and religious liberty. Here he passed his days, repining, but resigned, in the study of the Bible, and the perusal of the Commentators—huge folios, not easily got through, one of which would outlast a winter! Why did he pore on these from morn to night (with the exception of a walk in the fields or a turn in the garden to gather broccoli-plants or kidney beans of his own rearing, with no small degree of pride and pleasure)? Here were “no figures nor no fantasies”—neither poetry nor philosophy—nothing to dazzle, nothing to excite modern curiosity; but to his lack-luster eyes there appeared within the pages of the ponderous, unwieldy, neglected tomes, the sacred name of JEHOVAH in Hebrew capitals: pressed down by the weight of the style, worn to the last fading thinness of the understanding, there were glimpses, glimmering notions of the patriarchal wanderings, with palm-trees hovering in the horizon, and processions of camels at the distance of three thousand years; there was Moses with the Burning Bush, the number of the Twelve Tribes, types, shadows, glosses on the law and the prophets; there were discussions (dull enough) on the age of Methuselah, a mighty speculation! there were outlines, rude guesses at the shape of Noah's Ark and of the riches of Solo-

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mon's Temple; questions as to the date of the Creation, predictions of the end of all things; the great lapses of time, the strange mutations of the globe were unfolded with the voluminous leaf, as it turned over; and though the soul might slumber with an hieroglyphic veil of inscrutable mysteries drawn over it, yet it was in a slumber ill-exchanged for all the sharpened realities of sense, wit, fancy, or reason. My father's life was comparatively a dream; but it was a dream of infinity and eternity, of death, the resurrection, and a judgment to come!

No two individuals were ever more unlike than were the host and his guest. A poet was to my father a sort of non-descript; yet whatever added grace to the Unitarian cause was to him welcome. He could hardly have been more surprised or pleased if our visitor had worn wings. Indeed, his thoughts had wings: and as the silken sounds rustled round our little wainscoted parlor, my father threw back his spectacles over his forehead, his white hairs mixing with its sanguine hue; and a smile of delight beamed across his rugged, cordial face, to think that Truth had found a new ally in Fancy! Besides, Coleridge seemed to take considerable notice of me, and that of itself was enough. He talked very familiarly, but agreeably, and glanced over a variety of subjects. At dinner time he grew more animated, and dilated in a very edifying manner on Mary Wollstonecraft and Mackintosh. The last, he said, he considered (on my father's speaking of his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* as a capital performance) as a clever, scholastic man—a master of the topics—or, as the ready warehouseman of letters, who knew exactly where to lay his hand on what he wanted, though the goods were not his own. He thought him no match for Burke, either in style or matter. Burke was a metaphysician, Mackintosh a mere logician. Burke was an orator (almost a poet) who reasoned in figures, because he had an eye for nature: Mackintosh, on the other hand, was a rhetorician, who had only an eye to commonplaces. On this I ventured to say

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that I had always entertained a great opinion of Burke, and that (as far as I could find) the speaking of him with contempt might be made the test of a vulgar, democratical mind. This was the first observation I ever made to Coleridge, and he said it was a very just and striking one. I remember the leg of Welsh mutton and the turnips on the table that day had the finest flavor imaginable. Coleridge added that Mackintosh and Tom Wedgwood (of whom, however, he spoke highly) had expressed a very indifferent opinion of his friend Mr. Wordsworth, on which he remarked to them—"He strides on so far before you that he dwindles in the distance!" Godwin¹ had once boasted to him of having carried on an argument with Mackintosh for three hours with dubious success; Coleridge told him—"If there had been a man of genius in the room he would have settled the question in five minutes." He asked me if I had ever seen Mary Wollstonecraft, and I said, I had once for a few moments, and that she seemed to me to turn off Godwin's objections to something she advanced with quite a playful, easy air. He replied, that "this was only one instance of the ascendancy which people of imagination exercised over those of mere intellect." He did not rate Godwin very high² (this was caprice or prejudice, real or affected), but he had a great idea of Mrs. Wollstonecraft's powers of conversation; none at all of her talent for bookmaking. We talked a little about Holcroft. He had been asked if he was not much struck *with* him, and he said, he thought himself in more danger of being struck *by* him. I complained that he would not let me get on at all, for he required a definition of even the commonest word, exclaiming, "What do you mean by a

¹ William Godwin, a novelist and a political and social reformer. Mary Wollstonecraft was his first wife. He was the author of *Caleb Williams*, a novel mentioned later in the essay.

² He complained in particular of the presumption of his attempting to establish the future immortality of man, "without" (as he said) "knowing what Death was or what Life was"—and the tone in which he pronounced these two words seemed to convey a complete image of both. [Author's note.]

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sensation, sir? What do you mean by an *idea*?" This, Coleridge said, was barricadoing the road to truth; it was setting up a turnpike-gate at every step we took. I forget a great number of things, many more than I remember; but the day passed off pleasantly, and the next morning Mr. Coleridge was to return to Shrewsbury. When I came down to breakfast I found that he had just received a letter from his friend, T. Wedgwood, making him an offer of £150 a year if he chose to waive his present pursuit and devote himself entirely to the study of poetry and philosophy. Coleridge seemed to make up his mind to close with this proposal in the act of tying on one of his shoes. It threw an additional damp on his departure. It took the wayward enthusiast quite from us to cast him into Deva's winding vales, or by the shores of old romance. Instead of living at ten miles' distance, of being the pastor of a Dissenting congregation at Shrewsbury, he was henceforth to inhabit the Hill of Parnassus, to be a Shepherd on the Delectable Mountains. Alas! I knew not the way thither, and felt very little gratitude for Mr. Wedgwood's bounty. I was presently relieved from this dilemma; for Mr. Coleridge, asking for a pen and ink, and going to a table to write something on a bit of card, advanced towards me with undulating step, and giving me the precious document, said that that was his address, Mr. Coleridge, Nether-Stowey, Somersetshire; and that he should be glad to see me there in a few weeks' time, and, if I chose, would come half-way to meet me. I was not less surprised than the shepherd-boy (this simile is to be found in "*Cassandra*") when he sees a thunderbolt fall close at his feet. I stammered out my acknowledgments and acceptance of this offer (I thought Mr. Wedgwood's annuity a trifle to it) as well as I could; and this mighty business being settled, the poet-preacher took leave, and I accompanied him six miles on the road. It was a fine morning in the middle of winter, and he

talked the whole way. The scholar in Chaucer is described as going

“——Sounding on his way.”

So Coleridge went on his. In digressing, in dilating, in passing from subject to subject, he appeared to me to float in air, to slide on ice. He told me in confidence (going along) that he should have preached two sermons before he accepted the situation at Shrewsbury, one on Infant Baptism, the other on the Lord's Supper, showing that he could not administer either, which would have effectually disqualified him for the object in view. I observed that he continually crossed me on the way by shifting from one side of the footpath to the other. This struck me as an odd movement; but I did not at that time connect it with any instability of purpose or involuntary change of principle, as I have done since. He seemed unable to keep on in a straight line. He spoke slightly of Hume (whose *Essay on Miracles* he said was stolen from an objection started in one of South's sermons—*Credat Judæus Apella!*): I was not very much pleased at this account of Hume, for I had just been reading, with infinite relish, that completest of all metaphysical *choke-pears*, his *Treatise on Human Nature*, to which the *Essays*, in point of scholastic subtilty and close reasoning, are mere elegant trifling, light summer reading. Coleridge even denied the excellence of Hume's general style, which I think betrayed a want of taste or candor. He, however, made me amends by the manner in which he spoke of Berkeley. He dwelt particularly on his *Essay on Vision* as a masterpiece of analytical reasoning. So it undoubtedly is. He was exceedingly angry with Dr. Johnson for striking the stone with his foot, in allusion to this author's *Theory of Matter and Spirit*, and saying, “Thus I confute him, Sir.” Coleridge drew a parallel (I don't know how he brought about the connection) between Bishop Berkeley and Tom

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Paine. He said the one was an instance of a subtle, the other of an acute mind, than which no two things could be more distinct. The one was a shop-boy's quality, the other the characteristic of a philosopher. He considered Bishop Butler as a true philosopher, a profound and conscientious thinker, a genuine reader of nature and his own mind. He did not speak of his *Analogy*, but of his *Sermons at the Rolls' Chapel*, of which I had never heard. Coleridge somehow always contrived to prefer the *unknown* to the *known*. In this instance he was right. The *Analogy* is a tissue of sophistry, of wire-drawn, theological special-pleading; the *Sermons* (with the preface to them) are in a fine vein of deep, matured reflection, a candid appeal to our observation of human nature, without pedantry and without bias. I told Coleridge I had written a few remarks, and was sometimes foolish enough to believe that I had made a discovery on the same subject (the *Natural Disinterestedness of the Human Mind*)—and I tried to explain my view of it to Coleridge, who listened with great willingness, but I did not succeed in making myself understood. I sat down to the task shortly afterwards for the twentieth time, got new pens and paper, determined to make clear work of it, wrote a few meager sentences in the skeleton style of a mathematical demonstration, stopped half-way down the second page; and, after trying in vain to pump up any words, images, notions, apprehensions, facts, or observations, from that gulf of abstraction in which I had plunged myself for four or five years preceding, gave up the attempt as labor in vain, and shed tears of helpless despondency on the blank, unfinished paper. I can write fast enough now. Am I better than I was then? Oh no! One truth discovered, one pang of regret at not being able to express it, is better than all the fluency and flippancy in the world. Would that I could go back to what I then

was! Why can we not revive past times as we can revisit old places? If I had the quaint Muse of Sir Philip Sidney to assist me, I would write a sonnet to the road between Wem and Shrewsbury, and immortalize every step of it by some fond enigmatical conceit. I would swear that the very mile-stones had ears, and that Harmer Hill stooped, with all its pines, to listen to a poet, as he passed! I remember but one other topic of discourse in this walk. He mentioned Paley, praised the naturalness and clearness of his style, but condemned his sentiments, thought him a mere time-serving casuist, and said that "the fact of his work on Moral and Political Philosophy being made a textbook in our universities was a disgrace to the national character." We parted at the six-mile stone; and I returned homeward, pensive, but much pleased. I had met with unexpected notice from a person whom I believed to have been prejudiced against me. "Kind and affable to me had been his condescension, and should be honored ever with suitable regard." He was the first poet I had known, and he certainly answered to that inspired name. I had heard a great deal of his powers of conversation and was not disappointed. In fact, I never met with anything at all like them, either before or since. I could easily credit the accounts which were circulated of his holding forth to a large party of ladies and gentlemen, an evening or two before, on the Berkeleian Theory, when he made the whole material universe look like a transparency of fine words; and another story (which I believe he has somewhere told himself) of his being asked to a party at Birmingham, of his smoking tobacco and going to sleep after dinner on a sofa, where the company found him, to their no small surprise, which was increased to wonder when he started up of a sudden, and rubbing his eyes, looked about him, and launched into a three hours' description of the third heaven, of which he had had a dream, very different from Mr. Southey's "Vision of Judgment,"

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and also from that other "Vision of Judgment," which Mr. Murray, the secretary of the Bridge Street Junta, took into his especial keeping.

On my way back I had a sound in my ears—it was the voice of Fancy; I had a light before me—it was the face of Poetry. The one still lingers there, the other has not quitted my side! Coleridge, in truth, met me half-way on the ground of philosophy, or I should not have been won over to his imaginative creed. I had an uneasy, pleasurable sensation all the time, till I was to visit him. During those months the chill breath of winter gave me a welcoming; the vernal air was balm and inspiration to me. The golden sunsets, the silver star of evening, lighted me on my way to new hopes and prospects. *I was to visit Coleridge in the spring.* This circumstance was never absent from my thoughts, and mingled with all my feelings. I wrote to him at the time proposed, and received an answer postponing my intended visit for a week or two, but very cordially urging me to complete my promise then. This delay did not damp, but rather increased, my ardor. In the meantime, I went to Llangollen Vale, by way of initiating myself in the mysteries of natural scenery; and I must say I was enchanted with it. I had been reading Coleridge's description of England in his fine "Ode on the Departing Year," and I applied it, *con amore*,¹ to the objects before me. That valley was to me (in a manner) the cradle of a new existence: in the river that winds through it, my spirit was baptized in the waters of Helicon!

I returned home, and soon after set out on my journey with unworn heart and untired feet. My way lay through Worcester and Gloucester, and by Upton, where I thought of Tom Jones and the adventure of the muff. I remember getting completely wet through one day, and stopping at an inn (I think it was at Tewkesbury) where I sat up all night to read

¹ With love, heartily.

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Paul and Virginia. Sweet were the showers in early youth that drenched my body, and sweet the drops of pity that fell upon the books I read ! I recollect a remark of Coleridge's upon this very book that nothing could show the gross indelicacy of French manners and the entire corruption of their imagination more strongly than the behavior of the heroine in the last fatal scene, who turns away from a person on board the sinking vessel, that offers to save her life, because he has thrown off his clothes to assist him in swimming. Was this a time to think of such a circumstance ? I once hinted to Wordsworth, as we were sailing in his boat on Grasmere lake, that I thought he had borrowed the idea of his *Poems on the Naming of Places* from the local inscriptions of the same kind in *Paul and Virginia*. He did not own the obligation, and stated some distinction without a difference in defense of his claim to originality. Any, the slightest variation, would be sufficient for this purpose in his mind ; for whatever *he* added or altered would inevitably be worth all that anyone else had done, and contain the marrow of the sentiment. I was still two days before the time fixed for my arrival, for I had taken care to set out early enough. I stopped these two days at Bridgewater ; and when I was tired of sauntering on the banks of its muddy river, returned to the inn and read *Camilla*. So have I loitered my life away, reading books, looking at pictures, going to plays, hearing, thinking, writing on what pleased me best. I have wanted only one thing to make me happy ; but wanting that have wanted everything !

I arrived, and was well received. The country about Nether-Stowey is beautiful, green, and hilly, and near the seashore. I saw it but the other day, after an interval of twenty years, from a hill near Taunton. How was the map of my life spread out before me, as the map of the country lay at my feet ! In the afternoon, Coleridge took me over to All-

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Foxden, a romantic old family mansion of the St. Aubins, where Wordsworth lived. It was then in the possession of a friend of the poet's, who gave him the free use of it. Somehow, that period (the time just after the French Revolution) was not a time when *nothing was given for nothing*. The mind opened and a softness might be perceived coming over the hearts of individuals, beneath "the scales that fence" our self-interest. Wordsworth himself was from home, but his sister kept house, and set before us a frugal repast; and we had free access to her brother's poems, the *Lyrical Ballads*, which were still in manuscript, or in the form of *Sybilline Leaves*. I dipped into a few of these with great satisfaction, and with the faith of a novice. I slept that night in an old room with blue hangings, and covered with the round-faced family portraits of the age of George I and II, and from the wooded declivity of the adjoining park that overlooked my window, at the dawn of day, could

"——hear the loud stag speak."

In the outset of life (and particularly at this time I felt it so) our imagination has a body to it. We are in a state between sleeping and waking, and have indistinct but glorious glimpses of strange shapes, and there is always something to come better than what we see. As in our dreams the fullness of the blood gives warmth and reality to the coinage of the brain, so in youth our ideas are clothed, and fed, and pampered with our good spirits; we breathe thick with thoughtless happiness, the weight of future years presses on the strong pulses of the heart, and we repose with undisturbed faith in truth and good. As we advance, we exhaust our fund of enjoyment and of hope. We are no longer wrapped in *lamb's-wool*, lulled in Elysium. As we taste the pleasures of life, their spirit evaporates, the sense palls; and nothing

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is left but the phantoms, the lifeless shadows of what *has been!*

That morning, as soon as breakfast was over, we strolled out into the park, and seating ourselves on the trunk of an old ash-tree that stretched along the ground, Coleridge read aloud, with a sonorous and musical voice, the ballad of "Betty Foy." I was not critically or skeptically inclined. I saw touches of truth and nature, and took the rest for granted. But in the "Thorn," and the "Mad Mother," and the "Complaint of a Poor Indian Woman," I felt that deeper power and pathos which have been since acknowledged,

"In spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,"

as the characteristics of this author; and the sense of a new style and a new spirit in poetry came over me. It had to me something of the effect that arises from the turning up of the fresh soil, or of the first welcome breath of spring:

"While yet the trembling year is unconfirmed."

Coleridge and myself walked back to Stowey that evening, and his voice sounded high

"Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,"

as we passed through echoing grove, by fairy stream or waterfall, gleaming in the summer moonlight! He lamented that Wordsworth was not prone enough to believe in the traditional superstitions of the place, and that there was a something corporeal, a *matter-of-fact-ness*, a clinging to the palpable, or often to the petty, in his poetry, in consequence. His genius was not a spirit that descended to him through the air; it sprung out of the ground like a flower, or unfolded itself from a green spray, on which the goldfinch sang. He said, however (if I remember right), that this

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objection must be confined to his descriptive pieces, that his philosophic poetry had a grand and comprehensive spirit in it, so that his soul seemed to inhabit the universe like a palace, and to discover truth by intuition, rather than by deduction. The next day Wordsworth arrived from Bristol at Coleridge's cottage. I think I see him now. He answered in some degree to his friend's description of him, but was more gaunt and Don Quixote-like. He was quaintly dressed (according to the *costume* of that unconstrained period) in a brown fustian jacket and striped pantaloons. There was something of a roll, a lounge in his gait, not unlike his own Peter Bell. There was a severe, worn pressure of thought about his temples, a fire in his eye (as if he saw something in objects more than the outward appearance), an intense, high, narrow forehead, a Roman nose, cheeks furrowed by strong purpose and feeling, and a convulsive inclination to laughter about the mouth, a good deal at variance with the solemn, stately expression of the rest of his face. Chantrey's bust wants the marking traits; but he was teased into making it regular and heavy: Haydon's head of him, introduced into the "Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem," is the most like his drooping weight of thought and expression. He sat down and talked very naturally and freely, with a mixture of clear, gushing accents in his voice, a deep guttural intonation, and a strong tincture of the northern *burr*, like the crust on wine. He instantly began to make havoc of the half of a Cheshire cheese on the table, and said, triumphantly, that "his marriage with experience had not been so productive as Mr. Southey's in teaching him a knowledge of the good things of this life." He had been to see the "Castle Spectre," by Monk Lewis, while at Bristol, and described it very well. He said "it fitted the taste of the audience like a glove." This *ad captandum* merit¹ was, however, by no means a recommenda-

¹ The merit of pleasing the crowd.

tion of it, according to the severe principles of the new school, which reject rather than court popular effect. Wordsworth, looking out of the low, latticed window, said, "How beautifully the sun sets on that yellow bank!" I thought within myself, "With what eyes these poets see nature!" and ever after, when I saw the sunset stream upon the objects facing it, conceived I had made a discovery, or thanked Mr. Wordsworth for having made one for me! We went over to All-Foxden again the day following, and Wordsworth read us the story of "Peter Bell" in the open air; and the comment upon it by his face and voice was very different from that of some later critics! Whatever might be thought of the poem, "his face was as a book where men might read strange matters," and he announced the fate of his hero in prophetic tones. There is a *chaunt* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer, and disarms the judgment. Perhaps they have deceived themselves by making habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment. Coleridge's manner is more full, animated, and varied; Wordsworth's more equable, sustained, and internal. The one might be termed more *dramatic*, the other more *lyrical*. Coleridge has told me that he himself liked to compose in walking over uneven ground, or breaking through the straggling branches of a copse-wood; whereas Wordsworth always wrote (if he could) walking up and down a straight gravel walk, or in some spot where the continuity of his verse met with no collateral interruption. Returning that same evening, I got into a metaphysical argument with Wordsworth, while Coleridge was explaining the different notes of the nightingale to his sister, in which we neither of us succeeded in making ourselves perfectly clear and intelligible. Thus I passed three weeks at Nether-Stowey and in the neighborhood, generally devoting the afternoons to a delightful chat in an arbor made of bark by the poet's friend Tom Poole, sit-

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ting under two fine elm-trees, and listening to the bees humming round us, while we quaffed our *flip*. It was agreed, among other things, that we should make a jaunt down the Bristol Channel, as far as Linton. We set off together on foot, Coleridge, John Chester, and I. This Chester was a native of Nether-Stowey, one of those who were attracted to Coleridge's discourse as flies are to honey, or bees in swarming-time to the sound of a brass pan. He "followed in the chase like a dog who hunts, not like one that made up the cry." He had on a brown cloth coat, boots, and corduroy breeches, was low in stature, bow-legged, had a drag in his walk like a drover, which he assisted by a hazel switch, and kept on a sort of trot by the side of Coleridge, like a running footman by a state coach, that he might not lose a syllable or sound that fell from Coleridge's lips. He told me his private opinion, that Coleridge was a wonderful man. He scarcely opened his lips, much less offered an opinion the whole way: yet of the three, had I to choose during that journey, I would be John Chester. He afterwards followed Coleridge into Germany, where the Kantian philosophers were puzzled how to bring him under any of their categories. When he sat down at table with his idol, John's felicity was complete; Sir Walter Scott's, or Mr. Blackwood's, when they sat down at the same table with the King, was not more so. We passed Dunster on our right, a small town between the brow of a hill and the sea. I remember eying it wistfully as it lay below us: contrasted with the woody scene around, it looked as clear, as pure, as *embrowned* and ideal as any landscape I have seen since, of Gaspar Poussin's or Domenichino's. We had a long day's march (our feet kept time to the echoes of Coleridge's tongue) through Minehead and by the Blue Anchor, and on to Linton, which we did not reach till near midnight, and where we had some difficulty in making a lodgment. We, however, knocked the people of

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the house up at last, and we were repaid for our apprehensions and fatigue by some excellent rashers of fried bacon and eggs. The view in coming along had been splendid. We walked for miles and miles on dark brown heaths overlooking the Channel, with the Welsh hills beyond, and at times descended into little sheltered valleys close by the seaside, with a smuggler's face scowling by us, and then had to ascend conical hills with a path winding up through a coppice to a barren top, like a monk's shaven crown, from one of which I pointed out to Coleridge's notice the bare masts of a vessel on the very edge of the horizon, and within the red-orbed disk of the setting sun, like his own specter-ship in the "Ancient Mariner." At Linton the character of the seacoast becomes more marked and rugged. There is a place called the *Valley of Rocks* (I suspect this was only the poetical name for it), bedded among precipices overhanging the sea, with rocky caverns beneath, into which the waves dash, and where the sea-gull forever wheels its screaming flight. On the tops of these are huge stones thrown transverse, as if an earthquake had tossed them there, and behind these is a fretwork of perpendicular rocks, something like the *Giant's Causeway*. A thunderstorm came on while we were at the inn, and Coleridge was running out bareheaded to enjoy the commotion of the elements in the *Valley of Rocks*, but, as if in spite, the clouds only muttered a few angry sounds, and let fall a few refreshing drops. Coleridge told me that he and Wordsworth were to have made this place the scene of a prose-tale, which was to have been in the manner of, but far superior to, the "Death of Abel," but they had relinquished the design. In the morning of the second day we breakfasted luxuriously in an old-fashioned parlor on tea, toast, eggs, and honey, in the very sight of the bee-hives from which it had been taken, and a garden full of thyme and wild flowers that had produced it. On this occasion Coleridge spoke of Virgil's *Georgics*, but not

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well. I do not think he had much feeling for the classical or elegant.¹ It was in this room that we found a little worn-out copy of the *Seasons*, lying in a window-seat, on which Coleridge exclaimed, "*That* is true fame!" He said Thomson was a great poet, rather than a good one; his style was as meretricious as his thoughts were natural. He spoke of Cowper as the best modern poet. He said the *Lyrical Ballads* were an experiment about to be tried by him and Wordsworth, to see how far the public taste would endure poetry written in a more natural and simple style than had hitherto been attempted; totally discarding the artifices of poetical diction, and making use only of such words as had probably been common in the most ordinary language since the days of Henry II. Some comparison was introduced between Shakespeare and Milton. He said "he hardly knew which to prefer. Shakespeare appeared to him a mere stripling in the art; he was as tall and as strong, with infinitely more activity, than Milton, but he never appeared to have come to man's estate; or if he had, he would not have been a man, but a monster." He spoke with contempt of Gray, and with intolerance of Pope. He did not like the versification of the latter. He observed that "the ears of these couplet-writers might be charged with having short memories, that could not retain the harmony of whole passages." He thought little of Junius as a writer; he had a dislike of Dr. Johnson; and a much higher opinion of Burke as an orator and politician, than of Fox or Pitt. He, however, thought him very inferior in richness of style and imagery to some of our elder prose-writers, particularly Jeremy Taylor. He liked Richardson,

¹ He had no idea of pictures, of Claude or Raphael, and at this time I had as little as he. He sometimes gives a striking account at present of the Cartoons at Pisa by Buffalmacco and others; of one in particular, where Death is seen in the air brandishing his scythe, and the great and mighty of the earth shudder at his approach, while the beggars and the wretched kneel to him as their deliverer. He would, of course, understand so broad and fine a moral as this at any time. [Author's note.]

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but not Fielding; nor could I get him to enter into the merits of *Caleb Williams*. In short, he was profound and discriminating with respect to those authors whom he liked, and where he gave his judgment fair play; capricious, perverse, and prejudiced in his antipathies and distastes. We loitered on the "ribbed sea-sands," in such talk as this, a whole morning, and, I recollect, met with a curious sea-weed, of which John Chester told us the country name! A fisherman gave Coleridge an account of a boy that had been drowned the day before, and that they had tried to save him at the risk of their own lives. He said "he did not know how it was that they ventured, but, Sir, we have a *nature* towards one another." This expression, Coleridge remarked to me, was a fine illustration of that theory of disinterestedness which I (in common with Butler) had adopted. I broached to him an argument of mine to prove that *likeness* was not mere association of ideas. I said that the mark in the sand put one in mind of a man's foot, not because it was part of a former impression of a man's foot (for it was quite new), but because it was like the shape of a man's foot. He assented to the justness of this distinction (which I have explained at length elsewhere, for the benefit of the curious) and John Chester listened; not from any interest in the subject, but because he was astonished that I should be able to suggest anything to Coleridge that he did not already know. We returned on the third morning, and Coleridge remarked the silent cottage-smoke curling up the valleys where, a few evenings before, we had seen the lights gleaming through the dark.

In a day or two after we arrived at Stowey, we set out, I on my return home, and he for Germany. It was a Sunday morning, and he was to preach that day for Dr. Toulmin of Taunton. I asked him if he had prepared anything for the occasion? He said he had not even thought of the text, but

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should as soon as we parted. I did not go to hear him—this was a fault—but we met in the evening at Bridgewater. The next day we had a long day's walk to Bristol, and sat down, I recollect, by a well-side on the road, to cool ourselves and satisfy our thirst, when Coleridge repeated to me some descriptive lines of his tragedy of "Remorse"; which I must say became his mouth and that occasion better than they, some years after, did Mr. Elliston's and the Drury Lane boards—

"Oh memory! shield me from the world's poor strife,
And give those scenes thine everlasting life."

I saw no more of him for a year or two, during which period he had been wandering in the Hartz Forest, in Germany; and his return was cometary, meteorous, unlike his setting out. It was not till some time after that I knew his friends, Lamb and Southey. The last always appears to me (as I first saw him) with a commonplace book under his arm, and the first with a *bon mot* in his mouth. It was at Godwin's that I met him with Holcroft and Coleridge, where they were disputing fiercely which was the best—*Man as he was, or man as he is to be*. "Give me," says Lamb, "man as he is *not* to be." This saying was the beginning of a friendship between us, which I believe still continues. Enough of this for the present.

"But there is matter for another rhyme,
And I to this may add a second tale."

William Hazlitt

PLAYERS are "the abstracts and brief chronicles of the times," the motley representatives of human nature. They are the only honest hypocrites. Their life is a voluntary dream, a studied madness. The height of their ambition is to be *beside themselves*. To-day kings, to-morrow beggars, it is only when they are themselves that they are nothing. Made up of mimic laughter and tears, passing from the extremes of joy or woe at the prompter's call, they wear the livery of other men's fortunes; their very thoughts are not their own. They are, as it were, train-bearers in the pageant of life, and hold a glass up to humanity, frailer than itself. We see ourselves at second-hand in them; they show us all that we are, all that we wish to be, and all that we dread to be. The stage is an epitome, a bettered likeness, of the world, with the dull part left out; and indeed, with this omission, it is nearly big enough to hold all the rest. What brings the resemblance nearer is that, as *they* imitate us, we, in our turn, imitate them. How many fine gentlemen do we owe to the stage! How many romantic lovers are mere Romeos in masquerade! How many soft bosoms have heaved with Juliet's sighs! They teach us when to laugh and when to weep, when to love and when to hate, upon principle and with a good grace. Wherever there is a playhouse the world will go on not amiss. The stage not only refines the manners, but it is the best teacher of morals, for it is the truest and most intelligible picture of life. It stamps the image of virtue on the mind by first softening the rude materials of which it is composed by a sense of pleasure. It regulates the

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passions by giving a loose to the imagination. It points out the selfish and depraved to our detestation, the amiable and generous to our admiration; and if it clothes the more seductive vices with the borrowed graces of wit and fancy, even those graces operate as a diversion to the coarser poison of experience and bad example, and often prevent or carry off the infection by inoculating the mind with a certain taste and elegance. To show how little we agree with the common declamations against the immoral tendency of the stage on this score, we will hazard a conjecture that the acting of the "Beggars' Opera" a certain number of nights every year since it was first brought out has done more towards putting down the practice of highway robbery than all the gibbets that ever were erected. A person after seeing this piece is too deeply imbued with a sense of humanity, is in too good humor with himself and the rest of the world, to set about cutting throats or rifling pockets. Whatever makes a jest of vice leaves it too much a matter of indifference for any one in his senses to rush desperately on his ruin for its sake. We suspect that just the contrary effect must be produced by the representation of "George Barnwell," which is too much in the style of the ordinary's sermon to meet with any better success. The mind, in such cases, instead of being deterred by the alarming consequences held out to it, revolts against the denunciation of them as an insult offered to its free-will, and, in a spirit of defiance, returns a practical answer to them by daring the worst that can happen. The most striking lesson ever read to levity and licentiousness is in the last act of "The Inconstant," where young Mirabel is preserved by the fidelity of his mistress, Orinda, in the disguise of a page, from the hands of assassins, into whose power he has been allured by the temptations of vice and beauty. There never was a rake who did not become in imagination a reformed man during the representation of the last trying scenes of this admirable comedy.

If the stage is useful as a school of instruction, it is no less so as a source of amusement. It is the source of the greatest enjoyment at the time, and a never-failing fund of agreeable reflection afterwards. The merits of a new play or of a new actor are always among the first topics of polite conversation. One way in which public exhibitions contribute to refine and humanize mankind is by supplying them with ideas and subjects of conversation and interest in common. The progress of civilization is in proportion to the number of commonplaces current in society. For instance, if we meet with a stranger at an inn or in a stage-coach, who knows nothing but his own affairs, his shop, his customers, his farm, his pigs, his poultry, we can carry on no conversation with him on these local and personal matters; the only way is to let him have all the talk to himself. But if he has fortunately ever seen Mr. Liston act, this is an immediate topic of mutual conversation, and we agree together the rest of the evening in discussing the merits of that inimitable actor, with the same satisfaction as in talking over the affairs of the most intimate friend.

If the stage thus introduces us familiarly to our contemporaries, it also brings us acquainted with former times. It is an interesting revival of past ages, manners, opinions, dresses, persons, and actions—whether it carries us back to the wars of York and Lancaster, or half-way back to the heroic times of Greece and Rome, in some translation from the French, or quite back to the age of Charles II in the scenes of Congreve and of Etherege (the gay Sir George!)—happy age, when kings and nobles led purely ornamental lives; when the utmost stretch of a morning's study went no further than the choice of a sword-knot or the adjustment of a side-curl; when the soul spoke out in all the pleasing eloquence of dress; and beaux and belles, enamored of themselves in one another's follies, fluttered like gilded butterflies in giddy mazes through the walks of St. James's Park!

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A good company of comedians, a theater royal judiciously managed, is your true Herald's College—the only Antiquarian Society that is worth a rush. It is for this reason that there is such an air of romance about players, and that it is pleasanter to see them, even in their own persons, than any of the three learned professions. We feel more respect for John Kemble in a plain coat than for the Lord Chancellor on the woolsack. He is surrounded, to our eyes, with a greater number of imposing recollections; he is a more reverend piece of formality—a more complicated tissue of costume. We do not know whether to look upon this accomplished actor as Pierre, or King John, or Coriolanus, or Cato, or Leontes, or the Stranger. But we see in him a stately hieroglyphic of humanity, a living monument of departed greatness, a somber comment on the rise and fall of kings. We look after him till he is out of sight as we listen to a story of one of Ossian's heroes, to "a tale of other times"!

One of the most affecting things we know is to see a favorite actor take leave of the stage. We were present not long ago when Mr. Bannister quitted it. We do not wonder that his feelings were overpowered on the occasion: ours were nearly so, too. We remembered him, in the first heyday of our youthful spirits, in "The Prize," in which he played so delightfully with that fine old croaker Suett, and Madame Storace—in the farce of "My Grandmother," in the "Son-in-Law," in Autolycus, and in Scrub, in which our satisfaction was at its height. At that time King, and Parsons, and Dodd, and Quick, and Edwin, were in the full vigor of their reputation, who are now all gone. We still feel the vivid delight with which we used to see their names in the playbills as we went along to the theater. Bannister was one of the last of these that remained; and we parted with him as we should with one of our oldest and best friends. The most pleasant feature in the profession of a player, and which indeed is peculiar to it, is,

that we not only admire the talents of those who adorn it, but we contract a personal intimacy with them. There is no class of society whom so many persons regard with affection as actors. We greet them on the stage; we like to meet them in the streets; they almost always recall to us pleasant associations; and we feel our gratitude excited without the uncasiness of a sense of obligation. The very gaiety and popularity, however, which surround the life of a favorite performer make the retiring from it a very serious business.¹ It glances a mortifying reflection on the shortness of human life and the vanity of human pleasures. Something reminds us that "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players."

It has been considered as the misfortune of first-rate talents for the stage that they leave no record behind them except that of vague rumor, and that the genius of a great actor perishes with him, "leaving the world no copy." This is a misfortune, or at least an unpleasant circumstance, to actors; but it is, perhaps, an advantage to the stage. It leaves an opening to originality. The stage is always beginning anew; the candidates for theatrical reputation are always setting out afresh, unencumbered by the affectation of the faults or the excellences of their predecessors. In this respect, we should imagine that the average quantity of dramatic talent remains more nearly the same than that in any other walk of art. In no other instance do the complaints of the degeneracy of the moderns seem so unfounded as in this; and Colley Cibber's account of the regular decline of the stage, from the time of

¹ Hazlitt appears to mean that it is a very serious business for the public. That it may be so for the performer is perhaps equally true. The actress Fanny Kemble, in the course of an attempt to account for her early sense of the subtle dangers involved in a theatrical career, makes a pertinent observation concerning her aunt, the famous Mrs. Siddons. The "vapid vacuity of the last years of my aunt Siddons's life," she says, "had made a profound impression upon me,—her apparent deadness and indifference to everything, which I attributed (unjustly, perhaps) less to her advanced age and impaired powers than to what I supposed the withering and drying influence of the overstimulating atmosphere of emotion, excitement, and admiration in which she had passed her life . . ."

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Shakespeare to that of Charles II, and from the time of Charles II to the beginning of George II, appears quite ridiculous. The stage is a place where genius is sure to come upon its legs, in a generation or two at furthest. In the other arts (as painting and poetry) it has been contended that what has been well done already, by giving rise to endless vapid imitations, is an obstacle to what might be done well hereafter; that the models or *chefs-d'œuvre* of art, where they are accumulated, choke up the path to excellence; and that the works of genius, where they can be rendered permanent and handed down from age to age, not only prevent, but render superfluous, future productions of the same kind. We have not, neither do we want, two Shakespeares, two Miltons, two Raphaels, any more than we require two suns in the same sphere. Even Miss O'Neill stands a little in the way of our recollections of Mrs. Siddons. But Mr. Kean is an excellent substitute for the memory of Garrick, whom we never saw. When an author dies it is no matter, for his works remain. When a great actor dies there is a void produced in society, a gap which requires to be filled up. Who does not go to see Kean? Who, if Garrick were alive, would not go to see him? At least one or the other must have quitted the stage. We have seen what a ferment has been excited among our living artists by the exhibition of the works of the old masters at the British Gallery. What would the actors say to it if, by any spell or power of necromancy, all the celebrated actors for the last hundred years could be made to appear again on the boards of Covent Garden and Drury Lane, for the last time, in all their most brilliant parts? What a rich treat to the town, what a feast for the critics, to go and see Betterton, and Booth, and Wilks, and Sandford, and Nokes, and Leigh, and Penkethman, and Bullock, and Estcourt, and Dogget, and Mrs. Barry, and Mrs. Montfort, and Mrs. Oldfield, and Mrs. Bracegirdle, and Mrs. Cibber, and Cibber himself, the

prince of coxcombs, and Macklin, and Quin, and Rich, and Mrs. Clive, and Mrs. Pritchard, and Mrs. Abington, and Weston, and Shutter, and Garrick, and all the rest of those who "gladdened life, and whose deaths eclipsed the gayety of nations"! We should certainly be there. We should buy a ticket for the season. We should enjoy *our hundred days* again. We should not lose a single night. We would not, for a great deal, be absent from Betterton's Hamlet or his Brutus, or from Booth's Cato, as it was first acted to the contending applause of Whigs and Tories. We should be in the first row when Mrs. Barry (who was kept by Lord Rochester, and with whom Otway was in love) played Monimia or Belvidera; and we suppose we should go to see Mrs. Bracegirdle (with whom all the world was in love) in all her parts. We should then know exactly whether Penkethman's manner of picking a chicken and Bullock's mode of devouring asparagus answered to the ingenious account of them in the *Tatler*; and whether Dogget was equal to Dowton—whether Mrs. Montfort or Mrs. Abington was the finest lady—whether Wilks or Cibber was the best Sir Harry Wildair—whether Macklin was really "the Jew that Shakespeare drew," and whether Garrick was, upon the whole, so great an actor as the world have made him out. Many people have a strong desire to pry into the secrets of futurity: for our own part, we should be satisfied if we had the power to recall the dead, and live the past over again as often as we pleased. Players, after all, have little reason to complain of their hard-earned, short-lived popularity. One thunder of applause from pit, boxes, and gallery is equal to a whole immortality of posthumous fame; and when we hear an actor, whose modesty is equal to his merit, declare that he would like to see a dog wag his tail in approbation, what must he feel when he sees the whole house in a roar! Besides, Fame, as if their reputation had been intrusted to her alone, has been particularly careful of the renown of her theatrical

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favorites; she forgets one by one, and year by year, those who have been great lawyers, great statesmen, and great warriors in their day, but the name of Garrick still survives with the works of Reynolds and of Johnson.

Actors have been accused, as a profession, of being extravagant and dissipated. While they are said to be so, as a piece of common cant, they are likely to continue so. But there is a sentence in Shakespeare which should be stuck as a label in the mouths of our beadles and whippers-in of morality: "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not; and our vices would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues." With respect to the extravagance of actors, as a traditional character, it is not to be wondered at. They live from hand to mouth: they plunge from want into luxury; they have no means of making money *breed*, and all professions that do not live by turning money into money, or have not a certainty of accumulating it in the end by parsimony, spend it. Uncertain of the future, they make sure of the present moment. This is not unwise. Chilled with poverty, steeped in contempt, they sometimes pass into the sunshine of fortune, and are lifted to the very pinnacle of public favor; yet even there cannot calculate on the continuance of success, but are, "like the giddy sailor on the mast, ready with every blast to topple down into the fatal bowels of the deep." Besides, if the young enthusiast who is smitten with the stage, and with the public as a mistress, were naturally a close *hunks*, he would become or remain a city clerk, instead of turning player. Again, with respect to the habit of convivial indulgence, an actor, to be a good one, must have a great spirit of enjoyment in himself, strong impulses, strong passions, and a strong sense of pleasure; for it is his business to imitate the passions, and to communicate pleasure to others. A man of genius is not a machine. The neglected actor may be excused if he drinks oblivion of

his disappointments; the successful one, if he quaffs the applause of the world, and enjoys the friendship of those who are the friends of the favorites of fortune, in draughts of nectar. There is no path so steep as that of fame: no labor so hard as the pursuit of excellence. The intellectual excitement inseparable from those professions which call forth all our sensibility to pleasure and pain requires some corresponding physical excitement to support our failure, and not a little to allay the ferment of the spirits attendant on success. If there is any tendency to dissipation beyond this in the profession of a player, it is owing to the prejudices entertained against them—to that spirit of bigotry which, in a neighboring country, would deny actors Christian burial after their death, and to that cant of criticism which, in our own, slurs over their characters, while living, with a half-witted jest.

A London engagement is generally considered by actors as the *ne plus ultra* of their ambition, as “a consummation devoutly to be wished,” as the great prize in the lottery of their professional life. But this appears to us, who are not in the secret, to be rather the prose termination of their adventurous career; it is the provincial commencement that is the poetical and truly enviable part of it. After that, they have comparatively little to hope or fear. “The wine of life is drunk, and but the lees remain.” In London they become gentlemen, and the king’s servants; but it is the romantic mixture of the hero and the vagabond that constitutes the essence of the player’s life. It is the transition from their real to their assumed characters, from the contempt of the world to the applause of the multitude, that gives its zest to the latter and raises them as much above common humanity at night, as in the daytime they are depressed below it. “Hurried from fierce extremes, by contrast made more fierce,”—it is rags and a flock-bed which give their splendor to a plume of feathers and a throne. We should suppose, that if the most admired

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actor on the London stage were brought to confession on this point, he would acknowledge that all the applause he had received from "brilliant and overflowing audiences" was nothing to the light-headed intoxication of unlooked-for success in a barn. In town, actors are criticized: in country places, they are wondered at, or hooted at; it is of little consequence which, so that the interval is not too long between. For ourselves, we own that the description of the strolling player in *Gil Blas*, soaking his dry crusts in the well by the roadside, presents to us a perfect picture of human felicity.

Charles Lamb

IN comparing modern with ancient manners, we are pleased to compliment ourselves upon the point of gallantry; a certain obsequiousness, or deferential respect, which we are supposed to pay to females, as females.

I shall believe that this principle actuates our conduct, when I can forget, that in the nineteenth century of the era from which we date our civility, we are but just beginning to leave off the very frequent practice of whipping females in public, in common with the coarsest male offenders.

I shall believe it to be influential, when I can shut my eyes to the fact, that in England women are still occasionally—hanged.

I shall believe in it, when actresses are no longer subject to be hissed off a stage by gentlemen.

I shall believe in it, when Dorimant hands a fish-wife across the kennel; or assists the apple-woman to pick up her wandering fruit, which some unlucky dray has just dissipated.

I shall believe in it, when the Dorimants in humbler life, who would be thought in their way notable adepts in this refinement, shall act upon it in places where they are not known, or think themselves not observed—when I shall see the traveler for some rich tradesman part with his admired box-coat, to spread it over the defenseless shoulders of the poor woman, who is passing to her parish on the roof of the same stage-coach with him, drenched in the rain—when I shall no longer see a woman standing up in the pit of a London theater, till she is sick and faint with the exertion, with men about her, seated at their ease, and jeering at her

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distress; till one, that seems to have more manners or conscience than the rest, significantly declares "she should be welcome to his seat, if she were a little younger and handsomer." Place this dapper warehouseman, or that rider, in a circle of their own female acquaintance, and you shall confess you have not seen a politer-bred man in Lothbury.

Lastly, I shall begin to believe that there is some such principle influencing our conduct, when more than one-half of the drudgery and coarse servitude of the world shall cease to be performed by women.

Until that day comes, I shall never believe this boasted point to be anything more than a conventional fiction; a pageant got up between the sexes, in a certain rank, and at a certain time of life, in which both find their account equally.

I shall be even disposed to rank it among the salutary fictions of life, when in polite circles I shall see the same attentions paid to age as to youth, to homely features as to handsome, to coarse complexions as to clear—to the woman, as she is a woman, not as she is a beauty, a fortune, or a title.

I shall believe it to be something more than a name, when a well-dressed gentleman in a well-dressed company can advert to the topic of *female old age* without exciting, and intending to excite, a sneer:—when the phrases "antiquated virginity," and such a one has "overstood her market," pronounced in good company, shall raise immediate offense in man, or woman, that shall hear them spoken.

Joseph Paice, of Bread-Street-Hill, merchant, and one of the Directors of the South-Sea company—the same to whom Edwards, the Shakespeare commentator, has addressed a fine sonnet—was the only pattern of consistent gallantry I have met with. He took me under his shelter at an early age, and bestowed some pains upon me. I owe to his precepts and example whatever there is of the man of business (and that is not much) in my composition. It was not his fault

that I did not profit more. Though bred a Presbyterian, and brought up a merchant, he was the finest gentleman of his time. He had not *one* system of attention to females in the drawing-room, and *another* in the shop, or at the stall. I do not mean that he made no distinction. But he never lost sight of sex, or overlooked it in the casualties of a disadvantageous situation. I have seen him stand bareheaded—smile if you please—to a poor servant girl, while she has been inquiring of him the way to some street—in such a posture of unforced civility, as neither to embarrass her in the acceptance, nor himself in the offer, of it. He was no dangler, in the common acceptation of the word, after women: but he revered and upheld, in every form in which it came before him, *womanhood*. I have seen him—nay, smile not—tenderly escorting a market-woman, whom he had encountered in a shower, exalting his umbrella over her poor basket of fruit, that it might receive no damage, with as much carefulness as if she had been a countess. To the reverend form of female eld he would yield the wall¹ (though it were to an ancient beggar-woman) with more ceremony than we can afford to show our grandams. He was the preux chevalier² of age; the Sir Calidore, or Sir Tristan, to those who have no Calidores or Tristans to defend them. The roses, that had long faded thence, still bloomed for him in those withered and yellow cheeks.

He was never married, but in his youth he paid his addresses to the beautiful Susan Winstanley—old Winstanley's daughter of Clapton—who dying in the early days of their courtship, confirmed in him the resolution of perpetual bachelorship. It was during their short courtship, he told me, that he had been one day treating his mistress with a profusion of civil speeches—the common gallantries—to which

¹ That is, meeting the lady on the street, he would permit her to pass next the walls of houses—the safer or cleaner side.

² Gallant knight.

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kind of thing she had hitherto manifested no repugnance—but in this instance with no effect. He could not obtain from her a decent acknowledgment in return. She rather seemed to resent his compliments. He could not set it down to caprice, for the lady had always shown herself above that littleness. When he ventured on the following day, finding her a little better humored, to expostulate with her on her coldness of yesterday, she confessed, with her usual frankness, that she had no sort of dislike to his attentions; that she could even endure some high-flown compliments; that a young woman placed in her situation had a right to expect all sorts of civil things said to her; that she hoped she could digest a dose of adulation, short of insincerity, with as little injury to her humility as most young women: but that—a little before he had commenced his compliments—she had overheard him by accident, in rather rough language, rating a young woman, who had not brought home his cravats quite to the appointed time, and she thought to herself, “As I am Miss Susan Winstanley, and a young lady—a reputed beauty, and known to be a fortune,—I can have my choice of the finest speeches from the mouth of this very fine gentleman who is courting me—but if I had been poor Mary Such-a-one (*naming the milliner*),—and had failed of bringing home the cravats to the appointed hour—though perhaps I had sat up half the night to forward them—what sort of compliments should I have received then?—And my woman’s pride came to my assistance; and I thought, that if it were only to do *me* honor, a female, like myself, might have received handsomer usage: and I was determined not to accept any fine speeches, to the compromise of that sex, the belonging to which was after all my strongest claim and title to them.”

I think the lady discovered both generosity, and a just way of thinking, in this rebuke which she gave her lover; and I have sometimes imagined, that the uncommon strain of

courtesy, which through life regulated the actions and behavior of my friend towards all of woman-kind indiscriminately, owed its happy origin to this seasonable lesson from the lips of his lamented mistress.

I wish the whole female world would entertain the same notion of these things that Miss Winstanley showed. Then we should see something of the spirit of consistent gallantry; and no longer witness the anomaly of the same man—a pattern of true politeness to a wife—of cold contempt, or rudeness, to a sister—the idolater of his female mistress—the disparager and despiser of his no less female aunt, or unfortunate—still female—maiden cousin. Just so much respect as a woman derogates from her own sex, in whatever condition placed—her handmaid, or dependent—she deserves to have diminished from herself on that score; and probably will feel the diminution, when youth, and beauty, and advantages, not inseparable from sex, shall lose of their attraction. What a woman should demand of a man in courtship, or after it, is first—respect for her as she is a woman;—and next to that—to be respected by him above all other women. But let her stand upon her female character as upon a foundation; and let the attentions, incident to individual preference, be so many pretty additaments and ornaments—as many, and as fanciful, as you please—to that main structure. Let her first lesson be—with sweet Susan Winstanley—to *reverence her sex*.

Charles Lamb

CHILDREN love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditinary greatuncle or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived), which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too), committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and

all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighborhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psalter by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm"; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great-house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be

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turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavors of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such-like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a

morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens, too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed, too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarreling with him (for we quarreled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a

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reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech; "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name"—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone forever.

Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve

IN the month of May last there vanished a figure unique among the women who have reigned by their beauty and by their grace; a salon was closed which for a long time had united, under a charming influence, the most illustrious and the most diverse personages, and in which even the most obscure had had at one time or another their chance of appearing. The first in renown in this group of memorable names were stricken by death almost at the same time with her who had been their principal attraction and bond. A few only survive, dispersed to-day and unconsolated; and those who have done no more than pass through this elect society have the right, and almost the duty, to talk about it, as of a thing which is henceforth of interest to all and which has become a portion of history.

The salon of Madame Récamier was much else besides, but it was also, especially in the last years, a center and home of letters. This type of social organ, which has been so active in France and which has exercised so real a dominion (this very salon of Madame Récamier is proof of it), does not go back farther than the seventeenth century. It is in the celebrated Hôtel de Rambouillet that we are agreed to place the establishment of polite society, of the society where people gathered together for the purpose of talking among themselves of beautiful things and particularly of the things of the mind. But the solemnity of this Rambouillet circle accords little with the idea which I should now like to evoke, and I shall do

¹ The essay is dated Monday, November 26, 1849. The translation, by Frederick A. Manchester, is indebted in a number of details to the translations of E. J. Trechmann and Elizabeth Lee.

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better to seek in places more modest and more reserved the true antecedents of the type of salon whose last representative we have just seen disappear. Toward the middle of the seventeenth century, at the end of the Faubourg St.-Jacques, just outside the Port Royal monastery, a lady went into retirement who had been famous for her intellectual talents and for the long splendor of her triumphs—the Marquise de Sablé. In this semi-retreat, with its window opening on the convent and its door still ajar toward the world, this old friend of M. de La Rochefoucauld, still active in mind, still taking an interest in everything, continued to gather about her, until the year 1678, when she died, the most distinguished and the most varied persons,—old friends who had remained faithful and who came a long way to see her, from the city or the court; recluses, in a not too strict sense of the word, who, like herself, had been of the great world, and whose mind retirement had served only to sharpen and adorn; recluses by profession, whom, now and again, by her gracious importunity, she wrested from their vow of silence. These recluses, when they happened to be Arnauld or Nicole, could hardly, indeed, have been without worldly charm, and Pascal, once or twice, must have been of their number. This little salon of Madame de Sablé, so hidden, so much visited, and which, under the shadow of the cloister yet not too much feeling its influence, combined something of the advantages of both worlds, appears to me to be the earliest model of the salon which we have seen in our own day at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. It is only of this last that I have here to speak.

M. de Chateaubriand reigned there, and when he was present everything began or ended in him; but he was not always there, and even when he was, there were places and appropriate attentions and *asides* for each. Everything was talked of, but in confidence, as it were, and in tones a little more subdued than elsewhere. Everybody, or at least a great

many, frequented this salon, and yet there was about it nothing of the commonplace; you breathed there, from the moment you entered, an air of discretion and of mystery. Graciousness, but a graciousness at once sincere and discriminating, something personal—I know not what—put you immediately at your ease, and tempered the first effect of initiation into what had ever so little the character of a sanctuary. Distinction was there, and familiarity, or at least naturalness, a great ease in the choice of subjects (of much importance to the play of conversation), a prompt way of entering into what you were saying, which was not merely politeness and good-will, but which testified to a more genuine interest. From the first the eye was met with a smile which said clearly, “I understand,” and which irradiated everything with a gentle light. You did not go away, even for the first time, without having been touched in some private region of mind and heart, and you felt flattered and above all grateful. There were many distinguished salons in the eighteenth century, those of Madame Geoffrin, of Madame d’Houdetot, of Madame Suard. Madame Récamier knew them all and could describe them very well; anyone who wished to write of them with taste would have done well first to talk them over with her. But none of them could have resembled her own.

That was because she herself resembled no one. M. de Chateaubriand was the pride of her salon, but she was its soul, and it is she whom we must try to show to those who never knew her; for to recall her to those who have known her is superfluous, to paint her for them impossible. I shall take care here not to attempt her biography; biography women should never have—wretched word fit only for men and unpleasantly reminiscent of study and research. Even when they have nothing of moment to conceal, women cannot but lose charm in the text of an extended narration. Can, indeed, the life of a woman be told? It is felt—it passes—it ap-

pears. I should wish even to set down no date whatever, for dates in such a subject are scarcely in taste. However, since there is no help, let us note merely that Jeanne-Françoise-Julie-Adélaïde Bernard was born at Lyons, the birthplace of Louise Labé, December 3, 1777.¹ Of all the baptismal names that I have just enumerated, the only one by which she was ordinarily known was Julie, altered to Juliette—although there was never to be a Romeo. She was married at Paris in her sixteenth year (April 24, 1793) to Jacques-Rose Récamier, a banker, already rich or soon to become so. At the beginning of the Consulate,² we find her shining in society, fêted, applauded, the youngest queen of the world of elegance, giving the tone to fashion, with art creating simple things fit only for beings of the highest beauty. We who were not there can speak only with an extreme reserve of this epoch, mythological, as it were, of Madame Récamier, in which, from afar, she seems a goddess upon the clouds; we cannot speak of it as would be fitting—not indeed that there is anything to conceal, but because such beauty, youthful and tender, was possessed of subtle graces that cannot be described, at least not by one who has not seen them for himself. Who that had seen only the sunset would think to paint the dawn? Nevertheless, since one cannot well understand the character and the gracious genius of Madame Récamier, that ambition of the heart which in her showed so much strength and persistence underneath the delicacy; since one cannot well grasp her spirit and her total personality in the absence of a very definite notion as to what inspired her during this period—not so different, in fact, from what inspired her to the end—I shall touch rapidly some of the authentic elements in the legend which for her, as for all beings that wield enchantment, already hides the truth. When we wish to judge Madame de Sévigné or

¹ Louise Labé was a French poetess of the sixteenth century. For a translation of one of her sonnets, see *Poetry*, p. 511.

² That is, towards the end of 1799.

Madame de Maintenon, and interpret to ourselves their natures, we must of necessity have a general idea and a *theory* regarding them. To understand well, for example, what Madame de Maintenon was in relation to Louis XIV, or Madame de Sévigné in relation to her daughter, and what kind of sentiment or passion they brought to their object, one must first have asked oneself several questions concerning the youth of these two women, or more simply one must have asked oneself one question, always the first and almost the only one that needs to be asked in speaking of a woman: Was she ever in love? and in what manner did she love?

I shall then ask the question, or rather, in the case of Madame Récamier, the question arises of itself; and for her as for Madame de Maintenon, and for Madame de Sévigné (Madame de Sévigné not yet a mother), I answer boldly, *No*. No, she never loved, never loved with passion and with fire; but the immense need of loving which is felt by every tender soul was changed with her into an infinite need of pleasing, or, better, of being loved, and into an active determination and a fervent desire to pay in kindness for all that she received. We who have seen her in her last years, and upon whom as we passed have fallen the rays of this divine goodness, well do we know whether she was able to pay that debt, and whether indeed friendship did not find out in her that flame which love had never found.

Two epochs, very distinct, are to be noted in the life of Madame Récamier: her time of youth, of triumph and of beauty, the long bright morning that lasted till the sunset; and afterward the evening when the sun had gone—her old age I can never name it. In these two epochs, so diversely colored, she was at bottom the same, but she no doubt appeared to be very different. She was the same in two essential particulars, which alone explain her nature: the one that in her youth, when her life was gayest, she remained ever pure;

the other that, withdrawn to a quiet privacy and collected within herself, she still kept her desire of conquest and her gentle skill in winning hearts—yes, let us not shun the word, her coquetry. But (may the orthodox doctors forgive me the expression) it was a coquetry of the angels.

There are natures which are born pure and which have received, whether they willed it or no, the gift of innocence. Like Arethusa, they traverse the bitter sea; they resist the flames like those children of Scripture whom their good angel saved, and whom in the very midst of the furnace he refreshed with fragrant dew. Madame Récamier, in her youth, had need of this angel beside her and within her, for the world that she passed through and in which she dwelt was a motley world, and ardent, and she was at no pains not to tempt it. If I am to be truthful, I must a little lower the tone, descend a moment from the ideal plane of Laura and of Beatrice where it has been our wont to place her, and speak of her, in fine, more familiarly and in prose. I trust that when all is said she will have lost nothing.

When, radiant, she first appears under the Consulate, we see her forthwith surrounded, admired, and passionately loved. Lucien, the brother of the Consul, is the first historical personage who loves her (for I do not take account of Barère, who had known her formerly as a child). Lucien loves, he is not repelled, he will never be accepted. Just there is the nice distinction. It will be the same with all those who now press about her, as with all who shall succeed them. I saw not long since in the palace of the late king of Holland, at The Hague, a very beautiful statue of Eve. Eve, in her first flower of youth, stands opposite the serpent, who points out to her the apple; she gazes at it, she turns half round toward Adam, she makes as if to consult him. Eve is at that extreme moment of innocence when one plays with danger, when in secret one talks about it with oneself or with another. Now this

indefinable moment, which in the case of Eve did not last, and which ended so badly, began often anew and was prolonged in a thousand recurrences during the brilliant and sometimes thoughtless youth of which we speak; but always it was restrained in time and overcome by a more powerful sentiment, by I know not what secret virtue. This young woman, confronted with the passions which she excited and of whose existence she was unaware, exhibited the imprudences, confidences, curiosities, almost of a child or of a schoolgirl. She went into danger with a smile on her face, in careless security, with love and charity, somewhat as those very Christian kings of old were wont on a day in holy week to go to certain of the sick that they might make them whole. She had no doubt of her high prerogative, of her gentle magic, of her power. She first insisted, almost, on wounding your heart, in order that the pleasure and the miracle of healing it might later be hers. If you fell to murmuring or grew impatient, she would say to you, with hopeless clemency, "Come and I will cure you." And with some, with most, she succeeded. All of her friends—with but very few exceptions—had commenced by loving her. She had had many, and almost all of them she had kept. M. de Montlosier observed to her one day that she might say like the Cid, *Five hundred of my friends*. She was a true magician in the way she had of converting love insensibly into friendship, while leaving to friendship all the bloom of love and all its perfume. She would have liked to stop everything at *April*. It was there her heart had stayed, in this time of earliest spring, when the orchard trees are covered with white blossoms and the leaves have not yet come.

I might here recount from memory many things, if my pen were but light enough to pass over these flowers without causing them to fade. To her new friends (as she was sometimes pleased to call them) Madame Récamier used often and gladly

to speak of the old days and of the people she had known. "It is a way," she said, "of sharing the past with my friends."

Her intimacy with Madame de Staël, with Madame Moreau, with the wounded and the conquered, very early threw her into the ranks of those opposed to the Empire, but there was a moment when she had not yet chosen her color. Fouché, noting the power exercised by this young woman, conceived the idea of making her his tool. He wished, in the beginning, to introduce Madame Récamier into the imperial household as lady of honor; he did not like the nobility, and he would have been glad to have there a person at once influential and devoted. She declined to lend herself to such a rôle. Shortly afterwards she was in the opposition, by virtue especially of her friends and of the notions that were held regarding her.

She was not yet there when one day she dined with one of the sisters of Bonaparte. It was desired that she should meet the First Consul, who was, in fact, present. The intention was that she should be beside him at table; but by a mistake which occurred at the moment of sitting down she found herself instead at the side of Cambacérès, whereupon Bonaparte jestingly remarked: "*Eh bien!* Consul Cambacérès, always next to the prettiest!"

Madame Récamier's father, Monsieur Bernard, held a post in the mail service and was a royalist; under the Consulate he was compromised, arrested, and placed in confinement. Madame Récamier learned of this suddenly, while Madame Bacciochi, Bonaparte's sister, was dining with her at her house. Madame Bacciochi promised to do everything possible to interest the Consul. After the dinner Madame Récamier went out and tried to see Fouché, who, however, refused to see her, "for fear of having his feelings touched," he said, "and that in an affair of state." She then hurried to rejoin, at the Théâtre-Français, Madame Bacciochi, who was in the company of her sister Pauline, now all taken up with

the casque of Lafon: "Just look," she was saying, "how ill that casque is put on, how far off it is on one side!" Madame Récamier was in agony; Madame Bacciochi wished to remain till the end of the tragedy, because, perhaps, of her sister Pauline. Bernadotte was in the box; he saw the altered air of Madame Récamier; he gave her his arm to escort her, and offered to go himself, on the instant, and see the Consul. It was at this moment that Bernadotte's warm feeling for her had its beginning; before this time he did not know her. He obtained pardon for her father. What is said on this point in the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*¹ is inexact. Madame Récamier did not see Bonaparte on this occasion; Bernadotte took in hand the entire affair.

Bernadotte, then, loved her, and was one of her knights. The Montmorencys, at that time returned from the Emigration, were her knights no less. Mathieu de Montmorency, later the most saintly of men, Adrien (later Duke de Laval), and long afterwards the son of Adrien, who thus became the rival of his own father—all loved her passionately. Henri de Laval often encountered at her house the Duke de Laval, his father; he always held fast, however, and made no move to depart, a procedure which greatly vexed the good duke, and as he was a man of wit, he wrote to Madame Récamier in the most agreeable manner in the world: "My son is enamored of you, you know whether I am myself; well, after all, it is the fate of the Montmorencys:

*"Ils ne mouraient pas tous, mais tous étaient frappés."*²

Madame Récamier was the first to tell of these things, and she would smile at them gayly. She kept almost till the end her girlish laughter, her youthful way of putting her handkerchief to her mouth as if to restrain a gush of merriment. But,

¹ A book of memoirs compiled by Las Cases from conversations with Napoleon at St. Helena.

² They did not all die, but all were smitten.

in her youth, this childlike spontaneity, with its accompaniment of graceful coquetry, led more than once (can one wonder?) to serious complications. Not all the men who were drawn to her and fascinated by her were so easy to guide and to elude as was the peaceful dynasty of the Montmorencys. She must have had to do at times with fits of violence and revolt hard even for her gentle hand to soothe. As she played thus with human passions, seeking only to charm them, but inflaming them more than she knew, it was as if the youngest of the graces were to harness up lions and tease them for her sport. Imprudent as innocence itself, as I have said, she loved peril, the peril of others if not her own; and—why should I not say it?—in this hazardous and too easily cruel game she brought sorrow, kind and tender though she was, to many hearts; some, without wishing it, she greatly embittered, not only hearts of desperate and rebellious men, but also those of hapless rivals, abandoned for her without her knowing it, and wounded. There is here a serious side which at the last her charity in some degree comprehended; it is a lesson which the high solemnity that attaches to her noble memory does not forbid us to recall. With her instinctive purity and heavenly goodness, she herself was aware of it: for this reason she did not regret her youth—she the admired and the adored—nor its bright morning hours, nor its times of storm, even the most resplendent. She had no idea of a perfect happiness divorced from duty; she placed the ideal of romance where she herself had so little met with it—in marriage; and she told how more than once in her happiest days, in the midst of gayeties where she was queen, she had stolen away for a moment and gone apart to weep.

It is thus that I conceive her when she was in the whirl of society, before her retreat. A series of chapters might be written regarding her, which here I cannot even sketch. One of these chapters would be that of her relations and of her

intimacy with Madame de Staël. The two were alike brilliant influences, very distinct from each other, very often intersecting, almost never rivals, and mutually, in a high degree, complementary. It was in 1807, at the Château de Coppet, in the home of Madame de Staël, that Madame Récamier saw Prince August of Prussia, one of those vanquished at Jena; she, in her turn, soon vanquished and conquered him—a royal prisoner, brusque in demeanor, and sometimes embarrassing. This brusqueness sometimes gave him away. Once when he was riding horseback with Madame Récamier and wanted to say a word to her privately, he turned to Benjamin Constant, who was of the party, and said, “Monsieur de Constant, suppose you galloped on a bit.” And Monsieur de Constant had his laugh at German finesse.

Another chapter would treat of the easy conquest which Madame Récamier made at Lyons of the mild Ballanche, who gave himself to her from the first day, without ever even telling her of it. Another chapter would describe her less simple relations, relations less easy at first but finally so well defined, with M. de Chateaubriand. Madame Récamier had seen him for the first time at the home of Madame de Staël, in 1801; she saw him for the second time in 1816 or 1817, not long before the death of Madame de Staël, and this time also at her house. But these were only chance meetings, and the real intimacy was not effected till late, at the time when M. de Chateaubriand left the ministry, and at the Abbaye-aux-Bois.

There would also be a chapter to write on her intimacy with Benjamin Constant, which does not date earlier than 1814-15. The letters of Benjamin Constant addressed to Madame Récamier would here be of great assistance; but they would be very inadequate, from the point of view of the truth, unless they were supplemented by their counterpart, that is to say, by what he wrote for himself at the conclusion of their relations (many persons have read it), and, finally, unless

everything was lighted up by the kind of moral commentary not ordinarily to be found in lawyers' pleas. But that reminds me that an unpleasant dispute has been begun on this subject, and I hasten to leave it.

Before that on Benjamin Constant there would still be a chapter to write on the journey to Italy in 1813, the sojourn at Rome, the intimacy with Canova, the marble bust which Canova executed, and which this time, to be ideal, had only to copy its model; and then the sojourn at Naples with Queen Caroline and Murat. The heart of Murat, if I mistake not, remained a little touched. But enough of rapid perspectives.

When Madame Récamier saw the hour approaching when beauty droops and wanes, she did what very few women are wise enough to do: she did not struggle; she accepted, with taste, the first marks of time. She understood that after such successes as she had enjoyed, the last means of appearing still beautiful was to pretend to beauty no more. To a woman who saw her again after a number of years and was complimenting her upon her appearance, she replied: "Ah, my dear friend, I can henceforth have no illusions. From the day when I noticed that the little chimney-sweeps in the street no longer turned round to look at me, I understood that all was over." She was right. She was sensitive to all attention and to all praise, not less to the exclamation of a child or of the humblest woman than to the declaration of a prince. From the side of her elegant barouche, as it made its way very slowly through the crowds, she thanked every one for his admiration with a bow and a smile.

At two periods Monsieur Récamier had suffered serious financial reverses: the first time at the beginning of the Empire, the second time in the first years of the Restoration. It was on the latter occasion, in 1819, that Madame Récamier retired to an apartment of the Abbaye-aux-Bois. She never had a more distinguished position in society than when she

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lived in this humble asylum in a remote corner of Paris. It was from this place that her gracious genius, freed from too lively complications, made its goodness more and more felt. It may be said that she perfected the art of friendship and made it take a step forward: it was like one fine art the more which she had introduced into life, and which adorned, ennobled, and ordered whatever was about her. The spirit of party was then at its height. She disarmed angry passions, she softened asperities; she charmed away rudeness and sowed seeds of indulgence. She could not rest until she had brought together at her house her friends of opposite camps, and by her gentle mediation had reconciled them to each other. It is by such influences that society becomes society so far as is possible, by such influences that it acquires all its pliancy and all its grace. Thus it is that a woman, without forsaking her sphere, performs in the highest degree the work of civilization, thus it is that Eurydice fulfills in her own manner the rôle of Orpheus. It was by Orpheus that wild life was tamed; it is by Eurydice that civilized life is brought to its true goal and crowned.

One day, in 1802, during the brief peace of Amiens, not in the fine mansion on the Rue du Mont-Blanc, which Madame Récamier then occupied, but in the drawing-room of the Château de Clichy, where she was spending the summer, there were assembled a group of men representing many diverse opinions—Adrien and Mathieu de Montmorency; General Moreau; some Englishmen of distinction, Mr. Fox, Mr. Erskine; and many others: they stood there confronting one another, they remained on their guard; no one was willing to commit himself. M. de Narbonne, who was of the company, endeavored to start the conversation going, but for all his talents he had been unable to succeed. Madame Récamier entered: she spoke first to Mr. Fox, she said a word to each, she presented them one to another with appropriate

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words of praise—and on the instant the conversation became general, the natural bond was discovered.

What she did on this day, she did every day. In her little salon at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, she thought of everything, she flung wide her net of sympathy. Not a talent, not a quality, not a distinction, but she loved to become acquainted with it, to welcome it to her house, to serve it, to bring it to the light, above all to put it in harmony with everything about her, to mark it at its heart with a little sign all her own. Ambition had its part in all this, beyond doubt; but what adorable ambition, especially when, addressing herself as she did to the most famous, she did not neglect even the most obscure, and when she made it her special task to seek out the most miserable. It was characteristic of this manifold nature of Madame Récamier to be at once universal and very particular, to exclude nothing—or, I shall better say, to attract to herself all things and yet choose what she would.

The choice she made might even appear unique. Madame de Chateaubriand, during the last twenty years, was the grand center of her world, the grand interest of her life, the one to whom I will not say she sacrificed all the rest (she sacrificed none but herself), but to whom she subordinated everything. He had his antipathies, his aversions, and even his bitternesses, all of which are apparent enough to-day in his *Mémoire d'Outre-Tombe*. All these things she tempered and corrected. How ingenious she was in making him speak when silent, in putting into his mouth amiable words, words friendly to others, which no doubt he had just spoken to her in intimacy, but which he was not always disposed to repeat before witnesses. How she played the coquette for his glory! How well she sometimes succeeded in making him really gay, lovable, altogether happy, eloquent, all those things he could so easily be the moment he wished it! By her gentle influence over him she very well justified the remark of Bernardin de Saint-

Pierre, who said: "There is in woman a light joyousness that drives away the sadness of man." And in this instance with what a sadness she had to do!—a sadness which René had brought with him from the womb of his mother, and which grew greater with the years! ¹ Never was Madame de Maintenon at such pains to relieve the tedium of Louis XIV as was Madame Récamier to amuse M. de Chateaubriand. "I have always observed," Boileau used to say on coming back from Versailles, "that when the conversation did not turn upon his own praise, the King at once grew restless, and was ready either to yawn or to depart." Every great poet, as he grows old, is in this respect a little like Louis the Fourteenth. Madame Récamier had every day a thousand gracious inventions wherewith to renew for Chateaubriand the word of praise, and to give it freshness. From every side she rallied round him new friends and admirers. She made us all fast to the feet of her statue with a chain of gold.

An observer of mind no less delicate than just, who knew her well, said of Madame Récamier: "She has in her character what Shakespeare calls *the milk of human kindness*—a tender and compassionate sweetness. She sees the defects of her friends, but she is as tender with these as she would be with their bodily ills." She was a sister of charity to their sorrows, to their weaknesses, and, a little, to their faults.

That there were not in the long run certain disadvantages in this habitual procedure, mingled with a great charm; that in this atmosphere, so mild and so calming, while she polished and refined the mind, she did not a little relax it and render it complaisant, I dare not deny—and I dare it the less because I think that I myself, perhaps, experienced this effect. Certainly it was a salon where not politeness alone, but also

¹ The hero of one of Chateaubriand's works here stands for Chateaubriand himself. René is a romantic sufferer from ennui and melancholy, and is usually thought of as expressing an essential phase of his creator's character.

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charity, did injury in some degree to truth. Decidedly there were some things which she did not wish to see, and which for her did not exist. She did not believe in evil. In her inveterate innocence—I insist upon it—she remained very much a child. Shall we then complain? After all, is there another place on earth where we shall meet with a friendliness so real in the midst of an illusion so adorned? A bitter moralist, La Rochefoucauld, has said: “If we never flattered ourselves, we should have but little pleasure.”

I have heard people ask whether Madame Récamier was a woman of intellect. But it seems to me we have the answer already. She had in the highest degree, not the type of mind which seeks to shine for itself, but that which recognizes the ability of others and brings it to the light. She wrote little: very early she had contracted the habit of writing the least possible; but this little was good and of a perfect turn. Her talk was simple, accurate, and pointed. In telling of the past, she liked best to choose something delicate or subtle, a light-hearted or amiable saying, a piquant situation, and she neglected the rest; she remembered with taste.

She was a seductive listener; nothing good that you might say passed by without her letting you know that she saw it. She questioned you with interest, and attended wholly to your answer. On leaving her, were it only for her smiles and her silences, you had a personal interest in thinking well of her mind.

As to the youthfulness, the beauty, of her heart, if it has been given to all to appreciate it, it is especially for those some day to speak of it who have enjoyed it more intimately. After the death of M. Ballanche and M. de Chateaubriand, although she had still about her M. Ampère, the Duke de Noailles, and many other affectionate friends, she only languished and wore out her days. She died May 11, 1849, in her seventy-second year. This unique person, whose memory will live as long as

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French society, was very gracefully painted by Gérard, in the freshness of her youth. Her bust was sculptured by Canova in its ideal beauty. Achille Devéria made a faithful sketch of her on the day of her death, expressive of suffering and of repose.

Heinrich Heine

MARIA is lying upon a couch, ill; Maximilian, her only companion, is endeavoring to entertain her with fanciful talk; the conversation turns to the Italian violinist. The episode closes with the entrance of the doctor.

"Do you admire Paganini?" asked Maria.

"I consider him an honor to his country," answered Maximilian, "and he certainly deserves a most distinguished position among the musical celebrities of Italy."

"I have never seen him," said Maria, "but, if report speaks truly, his looks would hardly satisfy a fine eye for beauty. I have seen portraits of him."

"None of which resemble him," said Maximilian, interrupting her. "They all either flatter, or do him injustice. I believe there was but one man who ever succeeded in transferring Paganini's features to paper, and he was a deaf painter named Lyser, who, in his genial eccentricity, with a few rough strokes, made so truthful a likeness of Paganini, that the spectator was at once impressed with a double feeling of mirth and fear. 'The devil guided my hand,' said the deaf painter, while he chuckled mysteriously and shook his head with an air of good-natured irony, as was his wont when he indulged in such madcap flights. Ah! he was a strange fellow. In spite of his deafness, he loved music enthusiastically, and when he could get near enough to the orchestra could, it was said, read the music in the faces of the players, and tell whether the performance was more or less successful by watching the

¹ From the *Florentine Nights*. The translation is by Simon Adler Stern, and is reprinted with the permission of Henry Holt and Company.

movements of their fingers. He also wrote operatic criticisms for one of the leading journals of Hamburg. But is there anything remarkable in that? The deaf artist could see tones in the visible characters of playing. Are there not human beings to whom tones are as invisible characters in which they hear colors and forms?"

"You are such a one!" exclaimed Maria.

"I am sorry that I no longer possess Lyser's little drawing; it might have given you an idea of Paganini's appearance. Those strange features that seemed to belong to the sulphurous land of shadows rather than to the world of sunshine could only be seized in bold, sharp lines. When we stood in front of the Alster pavilion in Hamburg, on the day of Paganini's first concert, the deaf painter again assured me that Satan had directed his hand. 'Yes,' he continued, 'what all the world says about him must be true. He sold himself, body and soul, to the devil; and, in return, was to become the greatest of all violinists, to fiddle millions into his pocket, and to be liberated from the accursed galleys in which he had languished for so many years. For, you see, he got to be chapel-master at Lucca, and fell in love with a theatrical princess, of whom, and a little *abate*,¹ he became jealous, and by whom, in all probability, he was henpecked; whereupon, he stabbed his *amata*, in most approved Italian style, was sent to the galleys at Genoa, and, as I told you before, sold himself, in the end, to Satan, in order that he might escape, become the greatest of violinists, and be able to levy a contribution of two *thalers* upon every one of us. But look! Let all good souls praise God! For there he comes through the *allée*, accompanied by his ambiguous *famulo*!"

¹ Abbot, priest, clerk, or even layman in clerical garb. *Amata*, below, is mistress; *thalers* are German coins of the value of three marks; *allée* is alley; *famulo* is attendant on a magician.

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"It was, indeed, Paganini who approached. He wore a dark-gray overcoat, reaching down to his feet, and making him appear very tall. His long black hair fell upon his shoulders in wild locks, and, like a frame, encompassed his pale, corpse-like face, upon which grief and genius and hell had graven their indestructible characters. A short, self-complacent person in plain attire tripped along at his side. His face, although florid, was full of wrinkles. He wore a light-gray coat, with steel buttons, and bowed in every direction, with most excruciating politeness, while he, now and then, cast half-fearful, half-insipid glances at the somber figure walking at his side, serious and wrapt in meditation. It reminded one of Retsch's picture of Faust and Wagner, walking before the gates of Leipzig. The painter, however, criticized both individuals in his droll, peculiar way, and made me take particular notice of Paganini's long and measured step. 'Does it not,' he asked, 'seem as if he still had the iron bar between his legs? He will never get rid of that gait. Do you observe with what contemptuous irony he looks down upon his companion, whenever the latter annoys him with his dull and prosy questions? He cannot get rid of him. A bloody compact binds him to this servant, who is none other than Satan himself. The ignorant imagine his companion to be the dramatist and anecdotist Harris, of Hanover, and believe that Paganini carries him along in his travels in order that he may attend to the financial management of the concerts. They do not know that Satan has merely borrowed the form of Mr. George Harris, and that, along with other trash, the poor soul of that poor creature will remain locked up in a chest in Hanover until the devil returns its carnal envelope; when, in the nobler guise of a black poodle, he will accompany his master Paganini through the world.'

"But if Paganini looked sufficiently wild and remarkable in broad daylight, when he walked toward me, below the Jung-

fernstieg, how much more surprising was his terribly bizarre appearance at the concert in the evening! The performance took place in the Hamburg theater, and the art-loving public had assembled at so early an hour, and in such numbers, that I experienced difficulty in getting a seat near the orchestra. Although it was *post-day*, I saw, in the first tier of boxes, all of the fashionable world—a perfect Olympus of bankers and other millionaires, gods of coffee and sugar, attended by their fat household divinities, the Junos of Wantram and the Aphrodites of Dreckwall. All eyes were directed towards the stage; every ear prepared to listen. My neighbor, an old fur-broker, removed the dirty cotton from his ears, so that he might the more easily drink in the expensive tones, to hear which he had already paid two thalers. At last, a somber figure, which seemed to have risen from the dark regions, appeared on the stage. It was Paganini, in full evening dress. His black coat and vest were of some such horrible cut as mayhap infernal etiquette prescribes at the court of Proserpine. The black pantaloons flapped about his legs most wildly. His long arms seemed still longer when he made his strange obeisance to the audience, and bent so far forward that the bow in one hand and the violin in the other almost touched the floor. There was something so terribly wooden and so foolishly animal in the angular bendings of his body, that his bowing provoked a great desire to laugh outright. But his pale face, rendered still more death-like by the glaring lights of the orchestra, seemed so supplicating and so full of shy timidity, that shuddering compassion suppressed it. Had he learned these salutations from an automaton or a dog? Is his imploring look that of one doomed to death, or does the shrewd miser's scorn lurk behind it? Is it a living being, about to expire, and who in the arena of art, like a dying gladiator, wishes to regale the public with his death-throes? or is it a dead man risen from the grave—a vampire with a violin who

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instead of drinking our heart's blood, contents himself with drawing the money out of our pockets?

"Such were the ideas that engaged us while Paganini cut his interminable capers. All such thoughts vanished when the wonderful master placed his violin under his chin and began to play. As for myself—you know all about my musical second-sight, my gift of seeing the corresponding acoustic figure for every tone that I hear. Thus it was that every stroke of his bow displayed, to my eyes, visible scenes and forms; that in tuneful picture-writing he told me all sorts of strange stories, and caused gaudy phantoms, in which he, playing, was always the central figure, to stalk before me. As soon as his bow touched the strings, the scene around him suddenly changed. There he stood beside his music-desk, in a cheerful apartment loaded down with bright decorations and filled with scrolled furniture *à la Pompadour*.¹ On every hand there was a profusion of small mirrors, gilt Cupids, Chinese porcelain; a charming chaos of books, wreaths, white gloves, torn laces, false pearls, diadems of gold-foil, and other such tinselware as one is apt to find in the sanctum of a prima-donna. In the meanwhile, Paganini's appearance had changed for the better. He now wore short breeches of violet satin, a white vest embroidered with silver, and a coat of light-blue velvet with gold-covered buttons. His hair was carefully dressed in small locks and played about his blooming and youthful face, which was full of a sweet and tender expression whenever he glanced towards the pretty little woman who stood beside him while he played.

"In truth, at his side, I seemed to behold a young and pretty creature, clad in old-fashioned attire. She wore a dress of white satin slashed below the hips, her waist seeming the more charmingly narrow in consequence. As her powdered hair

¹ In the fashion named after the Marquise de Pompadour, favorite of Louis XV of France.

was brushed back, the round face beamed forth the more freely with its sparkling eyes, rouged cheeks and beauty-patches, and its pretty, saucy little nose. She held a roll of white paper in her hand, and, from the coquettish way in which her body moved to and fro, she seemed as if singing. But not a single note of hers was audible. It was only through the violin-playing, with which young Paganini accompanied the beautiful creature, that I got at what she was singing, and the emotions that filled his heart while she sang. They were melodies such as the nightingale warbles at twilight, when the rose's perfume fills her yearning heart with the promise of spring. O what melting voluptuousness! What blissful languor! There were tones that kissed, and then, pouting, eluded one another—then, laughing, they intertwined, and becoming as one, died away, drunk with joy. Yes, the sounds sported gayly, like butterflies—just as when one mischievously flees from another, hides behind a flower, is at last caught, and then, in thoughtless joy, flutters upward with its pursuer through the golden sunlight. But a mere spider can suddenly prepare a sad fate for such loving butterflies. Had the young heart such dread forebodings? A sad, sighing tone, like a presentiment of stealthily approaching misfortune, softly glided through the most ravishing melodies that radiated from Paganini's violin. . . . His eyes became moist. . . . He knelt in prayer at the feet of his *amata*. But alas! just as he bent forward to kiss her feet, he espied a little *abate* under the bed. I do not know what he may have had against the poor fellow, but the Genoese became as pale as death, grasped the little man with hands of rage, administered several slaps in the face, and, after bestowing quite a number of kicks, threw him out of the room; then drawing a long stiletto from his pocket, he plunged it into the lady's heart.

"At the same moment, cries of 'Bravo! Bravo!' resounded on all sides. Hamburg's enthusiastic men and women were

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bestowing their most boisterous plaudits upon the artist who had just finished the first movement of his concerto. He was bowing with even more angles and contortions than before, and his face expressed still greater dejection and humility than it had done in the earlier part of the evening. His eyes glared with terrible fear, like those of a poor sinner.

“‘Divine!’ exclaimed my neighbor the fur-broker, while he scratched his ears. ‘That piece alone was worth two thalers.’

“When Paganini again began to play, everything seemed dimmed and darkened to my sight. The tones did not, as before, assume distinct form and color; the body of the master seemed enveloped in dark shadows, from the depths of which his music sent forth a most piercing, sorrowful wail. Only at intervals, when the little lamp that hung above shed its rays upon him, did I behold his pale face from which the traces of youth had not yet departed. His dress was peculiar and was divided off into two colors, yellow and red. At his feet he dragged heavy chains. Behind him there moved a face, which revealed a merry, faun-like disposition; and I could occasionally see the long hand that seemed to belong to it, fingering about the strings of the violin as if to assist Paganini. At times it guided the hand in which he held his bow, and a bleating laugh accompanied the tones that flowed from the instrument as though they had cost pain and blood. Those tones were like the songs of the fallen angels who descended to the earth, their faces blushing with shame because they had been banished from the realm of the immortals on account of their having wooed the daughters of the earth. There was not one ray of hope or consolation in the abysmal depths of those tones. When the saints of heaven hear such sounds, the praises of God die on their lips, and, weeping, they hide their pious heads. When the *obbligato* goat-laugh mingled in the melodic struggle, I beheld, in the background, a crowd

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of little women, who nodded with malicious pleasure, and who, with crossed fingers and provoking malignity, hissed at the player. Then cries of terror and fearful sobs and sighs burst forth from the instrument—sounds such as were never heard on earth before, and never shall be heard on earth again, unless it be in the valley of Jehoshaphat, when the last trump of judgment resounds, and the naked dead creep forth from their graves to learn their fate. But, suddenly, the tormented violinist drew his bow with such energy of frantic despair that his chains rattled and broke, when his forbidding assistant and the mocking furies vanished.

“That very moment my neighbor the fur-broker said: ‘Pity! what a pity! His string has broken—and that comes of his everlasting *pizzicato!*’

“Had the string really broken? I do not know. I only observed the transfiguration of the tones, and Paganini and his surroundings seemed to have undergone another sudden change. I could hardly recognize him in the brown monk’s dress that hid rather than clothed him. With his bewildered face half hidden by his hood, a rope around his hips, and barefooted, Paganini, alone and defiant, stood on a rocky promontory by the ocean, playing on his violin; methought it was twilight. The glow of evening was reflected on the broad expanse of waters that gradually became redder, and roared more awfully in mysterious harmony with the tones of the violin; while the sea gained in ruddiness, the heavens grew paler, and when at last the angry waters seemed like so much red blood, the sky became ghastly and livid as a corpse, and large threatening stars came forth—and the stars were black—as black as shining coals. But the tones of the violin continued to grow bolder and more boisterous; the eyes of the terrible player sparkled with a horrid desire to destroy, and his thin lips moved so rapidly and fearfully that it seemed as if he were muttering some wicked old charm to lay the storm and unfetter the evil

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spirits imprisoned in the depths of the ocean. He would sometimes stretch forth his bare arm, so long and haggard, from the wide sleeve of his gown, and move his fiddle-bow through the air. Then, more than ever, did he seem a wizard, who with magic wand rules the elements; howls, as of the possessed, came up from the deep, and the angry, blood-like billows rose so violently on high that they almost splashed their red spray against the pale heavens and the black stars. There were shrieks and screams and crashes, as if the world were going to destruction; and still more stubbornly did the monk continue to play. He intended by the power of his strong will to break the seven seals with which Solomon fastened the vessels of iron, after he had locked the conquered demons in them. Solomon threw those vessels into the sea, and when Paganini's violin growled its angry bass-notes, methought I heard the voices of the imprisoned spirits. At last I seemed to hear the shouts of the liberated demons, and to behold their heads arising from the blood-red waves. There were marvelously ugly monsters—crocodiles with bat's wings, serpents with antlers, monkeys with conch-shells, sea-dogs with long patriarchal beards, female faces with breasts in the place of cheeks, green camels' heads, and hybrids of inconceivable form!—all stretching their webbed feet out towards the fiddling monk, and staring at him with cold, glaring eyes!

“In the excitement of exorcising them, his hood fell back, and his curly hair, playing in the breeze, encircled his head like black serpents.

“The whole scene so confounded me that I held my ears and closed my eyes, for fear of becoming crazed. When I opened them again, the phantoms had vanished, and the poor Genoese, looking as usual, was making his accustomed obeisance, while the audience applauded most energetically.

“‘Ah!’ said my neighbor, ‘that was the renowned performance on the G string. I play the violin myself, and I

know what it takes to acquire the command of that instrument.'

"Fortunately, the intermission was not a long one, or else the musical judge of furs had muffled me up in a long art discussion. Paganini quietly placed the violin against his chin, and, with the first stroke of his bow, the transfiguration of tones began again. The shapes they now assumed were less bright and corporeal than before. They arose in peaceful, majestic waves, swelling like the notes of an organ choral in a cathedral, and around me everything had extended in width and increased in height, until the space was so colossal that the eye of the soul alone could grasp it. A sphere of light floated in the center of the space; on it there stood a man of giant stature and proud mien, who was playing on a violin. Was the sphere the sun? I know not. But in the man's features I recognized those of Paganini, beautifully idealized, serenely clear, and wearing a smile of forgiveness. His body glowed with manly strength, a light-blue garment covered his noble form, and his black hair fell in curls upon his shoulders. And when, like some great god, he stood there playing the violin, it seemed as if the whole universe were listening to him. He was the human *planet* around whom the cosmos revolved with measured solemnity, and to the sound of blessed rhythms. Were the great lights that shone so peacefully while they floated around him the stars of heaven? And were the tuneful harmonies produced by their movements the music of the spheres, concerning which poets and seers have told so many charming tales? When I, at times, looked out into the dim distance, I thought I beheld nothing but giant pilgrims clothed in undulating white robes. They approached nearer, bearing white rods in their hands, and, strangest of all, the golden heads of their rods were the lights which I had mistaken for stars. Forming an immense circle, these pilgrims marched around the performer, the tones of his violin adding greater luster to their rods, while the chorals that issued from their lips, and which

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I had supposed to be the music of the spheres, were, in truth, the reverberating echoes of his instrument. The fervor of unutterable holiness dwelt in those sounds. They were, at times, tremulous and almost inaudible, like mysterious whisperings on the water; at others, swelling and breaking on the air like the tones of a horn by moonlight; and then bursting forth with boisterous joy, as if a thousand bards had struck the chords of their harps and had lifted up their voices in a song of triumph. Such tones the ear never hears, but the heart may dream them when at night it rests against the heart it loves. Perhaps, too, the heart can understand them, even by day, when, rapturously admiring some Grecian work of art, it loses itself in the beautiful lines and curves——”

“Or when one has taken a bottle too much of champagne!” suddenly exclaimed a laughing voice that startled our storyteller as from a dream. When he turned around, he beheld the doctor, who, accompanied by black Deborah, had softly entered the room.

Irving Babbitt

WE are told that Louis XIV once submitted a sonnet he had written to the judgment of Boileau, who said, after reading it: "Sire, nothing is impossible for your Majesty. You set out to write some bad verses and you have succeeded." The point of this story for the modern reader lies not so much in the courage of the critic as in the meekness of the king. With the progress of democracy one man's opinion in literature has come to be as good as another's,—a deal better, too, the Irishman would add,—and such words as deference and humility are in a fair way to become obsolete. We can scarcely conceive to what an extent men once allowed their personal impressions to be overawed and held in check by a body of outer prescriptions. Only a century ago an Edinburgh reviewer could write: "Poetry has thus much at least in common with religion, that its standards were fixed long ago by certain inspired writers whose authority it is no longer lawful to question." Racine tells us that the audience was afraid at the first performance of his comedy "*Les Plaideurs*," that "it had not laughed according to the rules."

The revolt came at last from this tyranny of the "rules," and the romantic critics opposed to the neo-classic narrowness their plea for wider knowledge and wider sympathy; they would see before they began to oversee, and be historical rather than dogmatic; they would neither exclude nor conclude, but explain; above all, they would be appreciative, and substitute

¹ Introduction and Section I of the concluding chapter of *The Masters of Modern French Criticism*. Reprinted with the consent of Mr. Babbitt, and by permission of, and by special arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.—In general, the author's notes are here omitted.

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the fruitful criticism of beauties for the barren criticism of faults. The weakness of this whole school has been its proneness to forget that knowledge and sympathy are after all only the feminine virtues of the critic. Hence the absence of the masculine note in so much modern criticism, hence the tendency of judgment to be swallowed up completely in sympathy and comprehension—*tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*.¹ Renan, one of the most perfect embodiments of the ideal of wider knowledge and wider sympathy, says that when anyone was presented to him he tried to enter into this person's point of view, and serve up to him his own ideas in advance. One thinks almost involuntarily of Dr. Johnson and how, when people disagreed with him, he "roared them down"; how men like Reynolds and Gibbon and Burke ventured to present their protest to him only in the form of a Round Robin so that the awful Aristarch² might not know on whom first to visit his wrath. It is of course well, and indeed indispensable, that the critic should cultivate the feminine virtues, but on condition, as Tennyson has put it, that he be man-woman and not woman-man. Through neglect of this truth criticism has tended in its development during the past century to become first a form of history, and then a form of biography, and finally a form of gossip. History and biography remind us in their gradual encroachments upon critical judgment of those mayors of the palace in Merovingian times who insinuated themselves under cover of the services they rendered and at last thrust themselves into their masters' place. It is true that judgment would not have been thus dispossessed if it had not first shown itself a *roi fainéant*.³

Sainte-Beuve himself, as we saw, labored during the latter part of his life to correct, or one might more fairly say to

¹ To understand all is to pardon all.

² That is, the dread critic—Aristarchus being one of the most celebrated of ancient grammarians and commentators.

³ Do-nothing king.

complete, his earlier method and to assert once more the supremacy of judgment. It is curious to trace the transformation of the militant romanticist of 1830 into the conservative who finally extols as the true type of the critic Malherbe and Boileau and Dr. Johnson. He follows these men in founding his own judgments for the most part on the traditional standards of the classicist, yet no one knew better than Sainte-Beuve that these standards were doomed. "Let us be the last of our kind," he exclaims, "before the great confusion."

The "great confusion" that Sainte-Beuve foresaw is now upon us. I pointed out that he himself has been correctly defined in his influence on his successors, not as a defender of standards and judgment, but as a great doctor of relativity. Now nearly all recent criticism, so far as it is anything more than a form of gossip and small talk, may be roughly classified as either impressionistic or scientific; and it is in this doctrine of relativity that both impressionistic and scientific critics unite. The impressionist is interested in a book only as it relates itself to his sensibility, and his manner of praising anything that makes this appeal to him is to say that it is "suggestive." The scientific critic for his part is interested solely in the way a book is related as a phenomenon to other phenomena, and when it is the culminating point or the point of departure of a large number of these relationships, he says that it is "significant" (the favorite word of Goethe). If the impressionist is asked to rise above his sensibility and judge by a more impersonal standard, he answers that there is no such impersonal element in art, but only "suggestiveness," and is almost ready to define art with a recent French writer as an "attenuated hypnosis." If the scientific critic in turn is urged to get behind the phenomena and rate a book with reference to a scale of absolute values, he absconds into his theory of the "unknowable."

We may illustrate by a familiar passage from Taine, who is easily the most eminent of those who have attempted to make

criticism scientific. "What do we see," he says in his English Literature, "under the fair glazed pages of a modern poem? A modern poet who has studied and traveled, a man like Alfred de Musset, Victor Hugo, Lamartine, or Heine, in a black coat and gloves, welcomed by the ladies, and making every evening his fifty bows and his score of *bons mots* in society; reading the papers in the morning, lodging as a rule on a second floor; not over gay, because he has nerves, and especially because, in this dense democracy where we stifle one another, the discredit of official dignities has exaggerated his pretensions, while increasing his importance, and because the keenness of his feelings in general rather disposes him to think himself a god."

Now in the first place the results of this attempt to infer from a poem the life and personality of the poet are strangely uncertain. We read in the recently published letters of John Richard Green that when Taine was in England getting information for the last volume of his "English Literature," he began talking about Tennyson with Palgrave, a great friend of the laureate. "Wasn't he in early youth rich, luxurious, fond of pleasure, self-indulgent?" Taine asked. "I see it all in his early poems—his riot, his adoration of physical beauty, his delight in jewels, in the abandonment of all to pleasure, in wine, and . . ." "Stop! stop!" said Palgrave, out of all patience. "As a young man Tennyson was poor—he had little more than one hundred pounds a year, his habits were, as they still are, simple and reserved, he cared then as he cares now for little more than a chat and a pipe; he has never known luxury in your sense." Taine thanked Palgrave for his information—and when the book came out Tennyson was found still painted as the young voluptuary of the critic's fancy.¹

Even assuming that Taine's inferences could be drawn correctly, he would have us fix our attention on precisely those

¹ *Letters of John Richard Green*, p. 372. Green's anecdote is perhaps not entirely fair to Taine's account of Tennyson as it finally appeared. [Author's note.]

features of a poem that are least poetical. The very prosaic facts he is looking for would be at least as visible in the writing of some mediocrity as in a work of the first order. It is, indeed, when Taine starts out to deal in this fashion with a poet of genius like Milton, to reduce "Paradise Lost" to a mere "sign," that the whole method is seen to be grotesquely inadequate. "Adam," says Taine in his critique of Milton, "is your true pater-familias with a vote, an M.P., an old Oxford man," etc. He listens to the conversation of Adam and Eve, the first pair, only to hear "an English household, two reasoners of the period—Colonel Hutchinson and his wife. Good heavens! dress them at once"; and he continues in this vein for pages.

But, says M. Bourget, speaking for the impressionists, there is another way of approaching the volume of verse that Taine would treat solely from the point of view of its "significance"; and in rendering the "suggestiveness" of the volume to the impressionist sensibility, M. Bourget proceeds to employ a luxuriance of epithet that lack of space forbids our quoting. He asks us to imagine a young woman alone in her boudoir on an overcast winter afternoon. A vague melancholy steals upon her as she reclines at ease in her long chair; all a-quiver with ineffable longing, she turns to her favorite poet. She does not surmise behind the delicately tinted pages of the beloved book the prosaic facts of environment, the obscure animal origins of talent that are so visible to Taine. What she does perceive is the dream of the poet—"the inexpressible and mysterious beyond that he has succeeded in throwing like a halo round his verses." For Taine the stanzas are a result; for the young woman "who intoxicates her heart with them so deliciously," they are a cause. "She does not care for the alembic in which the magic philter has been distilled, provided only this magic is operative, provided her reading culminates in an exquisite and trembling exaltation," and "suggests to her

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dreams either sweet or sad, but always productive of ecstasy." Who does not see, concludes M. Bourget, that entirely different theories of art are implied in the two ways of approaching the volume of verse?

The two theories are different, indeed; yet they are alike in this, that neither the "significance" of the volume to Taine nor its "suggestiveness" to M. Bourget affords any real means of escape from the quicksands of relativity to some firm ground of judgment. We may be sure that a third-rate bit of contemporary sentimentality will "suggest" more ineffable dreams to the young woman in the long chair than a play of Sophocles. To state the case more generally, how many books there are that were once infinitely suggestive and are still of the highest significance in literary history which yet intrinsically are now seen to be of very inferior value! This is eminently true of certain writings of Rousseau, to whom much of the peculiar exaggeration of the *sens propre*, or individual sense that one finds in the impressionists, can ultimately be traced. If the special modes of sensibility that impressionism exhibits go back to Rousseau, its philosophical theory may best be considered as a reappearance in modern thought of the ancient maxim that man is the measure of all things. This celebrated dictum became current at a decisive moment in Greek life and would indeed seem to sum up almost necessarily the point of view of any age that has cast off traditional standards. The all-important question is whether one interprets the maxim in the spirit of the sophists or in that of Socrates. The resemblance between the impressionistic and the sophistical understanding of the maxim is unmistakable; not only the individual man, but his present sensations and impressions are to be made the measure of all things. "All of us," says M. Anatole France, "judge everything by our own measure. How could we do otherwise, since to judge is to compare, and we have only one measure, which is ourselves; and this measure is

constantly changing? We are all of us the sport and play-things of mobile appearances." Perhaps no recent writer has shown more of the Socratic spirit in his use of the maxim than Emerson. "A true man," he says, "belongs to no other time and place, but is the center of things. Where he is, there is nature. He measures you and all men and all events." Though Emerson thus asserts the maxim, he has not therefore succumbed, like M. France, to the doctrine of relativity and the feeling of universal illusion that accompanies it; on the contrary, he has attained to a new sense of the unity of human nature—a unity founded, not on tradition, but on insight. He says somewhere that he finds such an identity both of thought and sentiment in the best books of the world, that they seem to him to be the work of "one all-seeing, all-hearing gentleman." Now it is evidently this one all-seeing, all-hearing gentleman who is for Emerson the measure of all things. The individual man is the measure of all things only in so far as he has realized in himself this essential human nature. To be sure, the line is often hard to draw in practice between the two types of individualist. There were persons in ancient Athens—for example, Aristophanes in the "Clouds"—who treated Socrates as an ordinary sophist. In the same way, there are persons to-day who fail to see the difference between Emerson and an ordinary impressionist. "The source of Emerson's power," says Professor Santayana, "lay not in his doctrine, but in his temperament."

Emerson's language is often indistinguishable from that of the impressionist. "I would write on the lintels of my door-post, *whim*." "Dream delivers us to dream, and there is no end to illusion." "Life is a flux of moods." But he is careful to add that "there is that in us which changes not and which ranks all sensations and states of mind." The impressionist denies this element of absolute judgment and so feels free to indulge his temperament with epicurean indolence; at the

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same time he has the contemptuous indulgence for others that befits beings who are the "sport and playthings of mobile appearances." M. France says that he "despises men tenderly." We would reply in the words of Burke that the "species of benevolence which arises from contempt is no true charity." Impressionism has led to a strange increase in the number of dilettantes and *jouisseurs littéraires*,¹ who to the precept *de gustibus non*² have given developments that would certainly have surprised its author. The Horatian plea for an honest liberty of taste has its necessary corrective in the truth that is very bluntly stated in a Spanish proverb, "There are tastes that deserve the cudgel." We are told that Sainte-Beuve was once so offended by an outrageous offense to good taste in a remark of Nicolardot's, that, yielding to an irresistible impulse, he kicked him out of the room. Dante, in replying to a certain opponent, says, with the instinct of a true Italian, that he would like to answer such "bestiality not with words but with a knife." We must remember that "good taste" as formerly understood was made up of two distinct elements: first, one's individual sensibility, and secondly, a code of outer rules by which this sensibility was disciplined and held in check. The observance of these rules became for the community of well-bred people a sort of *noblesse oblige*, and taste in this sense has been rightly defined by Rivarol as a man's literary honor. Now that the outer code has been abrogated, taste is not therefore delivered over to the caprices of a vagrant sensibility; taste is attained only when this sensibility is rectified with reference to standards inwardly apprehended, and in this sense may be defined as a man's literary conscience; it is, in short, only one aspect of the struggle between our lower and higher selves.³ Some, indeed, would maintain that taste is not a

¹ Literary epicureans.

² *De gustibus non disputandum est*: There is no disputing about tastes.

³ For an excellent commentary on the last member of this sentence see the passage reprinted from Matthew Arnold, below, pp. 394ff.

thing thus to be won by any effort of the will, but is rather an inborn and incommunicable tact, a sort of mysterious election, a free gift of the muses to a predestined few; that in literature many are called and few are chosen. In the article "Goût" ¹ of the "Philosophical Dictionary," Voltaire discourses on the small number of the elect in matters of taste, and in almost the next article ("Grâce" ²) turns all his powers of mockery on those who assert the same doctrine in religion. Not only individuals but whole nations were once held to be under the reprobation of the muses. As Voltaire says sadly, *presque tout l'univers est barbare*.³ Perhaps even to-day persons might be found who would regard as legitimate the famous query of Father Bouhours whether a German can have wit. There are only too many examples in Germany and elsewhere of how far infinite industry and good intentions are from sufficing for the attainment of taste. However it may be in theology, it remains true in literature, as Gautier remarks, that works without grace are of no avail.

But one may recognize an element of predestination in the problem of taste and not therefore acquiesce in the impressionist's preaching of the fatality and finality of temperament. Every one, to be sure, has an initial or temperamental taste, but it is hard to say how far this taste may be transformed by subordinating it to the higher claims of our nature. Dr. Johnson says that if he had no duties and no reference to futurity he should spend his life in driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman. Here then is the temperamental taste of Dr. Johnson, and if he had been a disciple of M. France, he might have accepted it as final. Boswell reports an outburst of Johnson on this very subject: "Do not, Sir, accustom yourself

¹ Taste.

² Grace—a theological term, meaning, in the present connection, the aid arbitrarily accorded by God to such sinners as are destined to be saved. Under the doctrine of grace in this form the sinner cannot attain to salvation by any effort of his own.

³ Almost all the universe is barbarous.

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to trust to *impressions*. By trusting to impressions, a man may gradually come to yield to them, and at length be subject to them, so as not to be a free agent, or what is the same thing in effect, to *suppose* that he is not a free agent. A man who is in that state should not be suffered to live; . . . there can be no confidence in him, no more than in a tiger."

Johnson would evidently have agreed with the Buddhists in looking on the indolent settling down of a man in his own temperament as the chief of all the deadly sins. A fulmination like the foregoing is good to clear the air after the debilitating sophistries of M. France. Yet we feel that Johnson's point of view implies an undue denial of the individual's right to his own impressions and that therefore it has become in some measure obsolete. It is well for us, after all, to have fresh and vivid and personal impressions; it is well for us, in short, to awaken our senses; but we should "awaken our senses that we may the better judge"—and not simply that we may the better enjoy. For instance, Walter Pater continually dwells on the need of awakening our senses, but when he speaks of "living in the full stream of refined sensation," when he urges us to gather ourselves together "into one desperate effort to see and touch," there is a hedonistic flavor in these utterances that can escape no one. On the other hand, there should be no ascetic denial of the value of the impression in itself. Brunetière is reported to have said to another critic, whom he suspected of intellectual epicureanism, "*You* always praise what pleases you, *I* never do." This is an asceticism of taste worthy of the spectator of Racine's comedy who wished to laugh according to the rules. And so Brunetière was led naturally into his reactionary attitude; seeing only the evil possibilities of individualism, he would have the modern man forego his claim to be the measure of all things, and submit once more to outer authority. A certain type of seventeenth-century critic attempted to establish a standard that was entirely outside the in-

dividual. The impressionist has gone to the opposite extreme and set up a standard that is entirely within the individual. The problem is to find some middle ground between Procrustes and Proteus;¹ and this right mean would seem to lie in a standard that is in the individual and yet is felt by him to transcend his personal self and lay hold of that part of his nature that he possesses in common with other men.

The impressionist not only refuses the individual man any such principle of judgment to which he may appeal from his fleeting impressions; he goes farther and refuses men collectively any avenue of escape from universal illusion and relativity; he denies in short the doctrine embodied in the old church maxim, *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*,² a doctrine so fundamental, we may note in passing, that in the form attributed to Lincoln it has become the cornerstone of democracy, "You cannot fool all the people all the time." M. Anatole France is fond of insisting, like Sainte-Beuve before him, that there inheres in mankind as a whole no such power of righting itself and triumphing over its own errors and illusions. A whole chapter might be made up of passages from Sainte-Beuve on the vanity of fame. "Posterity has allowed three-fourths of the works of antiquity to perish," says M. France in turn; "it has allowed the rest to be frightfully corrupted. . . . In the little that it has kept there are detestable books which are none the less immortal. Varius, we are told, was the equal of Virgil. He has perished. Ælian was an ass, and he survives. There is posterity for you," etc. Here again the contrast between the two types of individualist is absolute. "There is no luck in literary reputation," says Emerson. "They who make up the final verdict for every book are not the partial and noisy public of the hour, but a court as of angels; a public not to be bribed,

¹ That is, between an extreme rigidity and an extreme fluidity—Procrustes and Proteus being mythological personages who have come to stand, respectively, for these qualities.

² What is believed by the whole earth is true.

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not to be entreated, and not to be overawed decides upon every man's title to fame. Only those books come down which deserve to last. Blackmore, Kotzebue, or Pollock may endure for a night, but Moses and Homer stand forever. The permanence of all books is fixed by no effort friendly or hostile, but by their own specific gravity or the intrinsic importance of their contents to the constant mind of man."

We should add, then, in order to define our critical standard completely, that the judgment of the keen-sighted few in the present needs to be ratified by the verdict of posterity.

21 ON GIOTTO AND ON PAINTING AS AN ART¹

Bernhard Berenson

THE first of the great personalities in Florentine painting was Giotto. Although he affords no exception to the rule that the great Florentines exploited all the arts in the endeavor to express themselves, he, Giotto, renowned as architect and sculptor, reputed as wit and versifier, differed from most of his Tuscan successors in having peculiar aptitude for the essential in painting *as an art*.

But before we can appreciate his real value, we must come to an agreement as to what in the art of figure-painting—the craft has its own altogether diverse laws—is the essential; for figure-painting, we may say at once, was not only the one preoccupation of Giotto, but the dominant interest of the entire Florentine school.

Psychology has ascertained that sight alone gives us no accurate sense of the third dimension. In our infancy, long before we are conscious of the process, the sense of touch, helped on by muscular sensations of movement, teaches us to appreciate depth, the third dimension, both in objects and in space.

In the same unconscious years we learn to make of touch, of the third dimension, the test of reality. The child is still dimly aware of the intimate connection between touch and the third dimension. He cannot persuade himself of the unreality of Looking-Glass Land until he has touched the back of the mirror. Later, we entirely forget the connection, although it remains true that every time our eyes recognize

¹ Chapter II of *The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance*. Reprinted through the courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, Publishers, New York and London.

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reality, we are, as a matter of fact, giving tactile values to retinal impressions.

Now, painting is an art which aims at giving an abiding impression of artistic reality with only two dimensions. The painter must, therefore, do consciously what we all do unconsciously,—construct his third dimension. And he can accomplish his task only as we accomplish ours, by giving tactile values to retinal impressions. His first business, therefore, is to rouse the tactile sense, for I must have the illusion of being able to touch a figure, I must have the illusion of varying muscular sensations inside my palm and fingers corresponding to the various projections of this figure, before I shall take it for granted as real, and let it affect me lastingly.

It follows that the essential in the art of painting—as distinguished from the art of coloring, I beg the reader to observe—is somehow to stimulate our consciousness of tactile values, so that the picture shall have at least as much power as the object represented, to appeal to our tactile imagination.

Well, it was of the power to stimulate the tactile consciousness—of the essential, as I have ventured to call it, in the art of painting—that Giotto was supreme master. This is his everlasting claim to greatness, and it is this which will make him a source of highest æsthetic delight for a period at least as long as decipherable traces of his handiwork remain on moldering panel or crumbling wall. For great though he was as a poet, enthralling as a story-teller, splendid and majestic as a composer, he was in these qualities superior in degree only to many of the masters who painted in various parts of Europe during the thousand years that intervened between the decline of antique, and the birth, in his own person, of modern painting. But none of these masters had the power to stimulate the tactile imagination, and, consequently, they never painted a figure which has artistic existence. Their works have value, if at all, as highly elaborate, very intelligible symbols, capable,

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indeed, of communicating something, but losing all higher value the moment the message is delivered.

Giotto's paintings, on the contrary, have not only as much power of appealing to the tactile imagination as is possessed by the objects represented—human figures in particular—but actually more, with the necessary result that to his contemporaries they conveyed a *keener* sense of reality, of life-likeness, than the objects themselves! We whose current knowledge of anatomy is greater, who expect more articulation and suppleness in the human figure, who, in short, see much less naïvely now than Giotto's contemporaries, no longer find his paintings more than life-like; but we still feel them to be intensely real in the sense that they still powerfully appeal to our tactile imagination, thereby compelling us, as do all things that stimulate our sense of touch while they present themselves to our eyes, to take their existence for granted. And it is only when we can take for granted the existence of the object painted that it can begin to give us pleasure that is genuinely artistic, as separated from the interest we feel in symbols.

At the risk of seeming to wander off into the boundless domain of æsthetics, we must stop at this point for a moment to make sure that we are of one mind regarding the meaning of the phrase "artistic pleasure," in so far, at least, as it is used in connection with painting.

What is the point at which ordinary pleasures pass over into the specific pleasures derived from each one of the arts? Our judgment about the merits of any given work of art depends to a large extent upon our answer to this question. Those who have not yet differentiated the specific pleasures of the art of painting from the pleasures they derive from the art of literature, will be likely to fall into the error of judging the picture by its dramatic presentation of a situation or its rendering of character; will, in short, demand of the painting that it shall be in the first place a

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good *illustration*. Those others who seek in painting what is usually sought in music, the communication of a pleasurable state of emotion, will prefer pictures which suggest pleasant associations, nice people, refined amusements, agreeable landscapes. In many cases this lack of clearness is of comparatively slight importance, the given picture containing all these pleasure-giving elements in addition to the qualities peculiar to the art of painting. But in the case of the Florentines, the distinction is of vital consequence, for they have been the artists in Europe who have most resolutely set themselves to work upon the specific problems of the art of figure-painting, and have neglected, more than any other school, to call to their aid the secondary pleasures of association. With them the issue is clear. If we wish to appreciate their merit, we are forced to disregard the desire for pretty or agreeable types, dramatically interpreted situations, and, in fact, "suggestiveness" of any kind. Worse still, we must even forego our pleasure in color, often a genuinely artistic pleasure, for they never systematically exploited this element, and in some of their best works the color is actually harsh and unpleasant. It was in fact upon form, and form alone, that the great Florentine masters concentrated their efforts, and we are consequently forced to the belief that, in their pictures at least, form is the principal source of our æsthetic enjoyment.

Now in what way, we ask, can form in painting give me a sensation of pleasure which differs from the ordinary sensations I receive from form? How is it that an object whose recognition in nature may have given me no pleasure, becomes, when recognized in a picture, a source of æsthetic enjoyment, or that recognition pleasurable in nature becomes an enhanced pleasure the moment it is transferred to art? The answer, I believe, depends upon the fact that art stimulates to an unwonted activity psychical processes which are in

themselves the source of most (if not all) of our pleasures, and which here, free from disturbing physical sensations, never tend to pass over into pain. For instance: I am in the habit of realizing a given object with an intensity that we shall value as 2. If I suddenly realize this familiar object with an intensity of 4, I receive the immediate pleasure which accompanies a doubling of my mental activity. But the pleasure rarely stops here. Those who are capable of receiving direct pleasure from a work of art, are generally led on to the further pleasures of self-consciousness. The fact that the psychical process of recognition goes forward with the unusual intensity of 4 to 2, overwhelms them with the sense of having twice the capacity they had credited themselves with; their whole personality is enhanced, and, being aware that this enhancement is connected with the object in question, they for some time after take not only an increased interest in it, but continue to realize it with the new intensity. Precisely this is what form does in painting: it lends a higher coefficient of reality to the object represented, with the consequent enjoyment of accelerated psychical processes, and the exhilarating sense of increased capacity in the observer. (Hence, by the way, the greater pleasure we take in the object painted than in itself.)

And it happens thus. We remember that to realize form we must give tactile values to retinal sensations. Ordinarily we have considerable difficulty in skimming off these tactile values, and by the time they have reached our consciousness, they have lost much of their strength. Obviously, the artist who gives us these values more rapidly than the object itself gives them, gives us the pleasures consequent upon a more vivid realization of the object, and the further pleasures that come from the sense of greater psychical capacity.

Furthermore, the stimulation of our tactile imagination awakens our consciousness of the importance of the tactile sense

in our physical and mental functioning, and thus, again, by making us feel better provided for life than we were aware of being, gives us a heightened sense of capacity. And this brings us back once more to the statement that the chief business of the figure painter, as an artist, is to stimulate the tactile imagination.

The proportions of this small book forbid me to develop further a theme, the adequate treatment of which would require more than the entire space at my command. I must be satisfied with the crude and unilluminated exposition given already, allowing myself this further word only, that I do not mean to imply that we get no pleasure from a picture except the tactile satisfaction. On the contrary, we get much pleasure from composition, more from color, and perhaps more still from movement, to say nothing of all the possible associative pleasures for which every work of art is the occasion. What I do wish to say is that *unless* it satisfies our tactile imagination, a picture will not exert the fascination of an ever-heightened reality; first we shall exhaust its ideas, and then its power of appealing to our emotions, and its "beauty" will not seem more significant at the thousandth look than at the first.

My need of dwelling upon this subject at all, I must repeat, arises from the fact that although this principle is important indeed in other schools, it is all-important in the Florentine school. Without its due appreciation it would be impossible to do justice to Florentine painting. We should lose ourselves in admiration of its "teaching," or perchance of its historical importance—as if historical importance were synonymous with artistic significance!—but we should never realize what artistic idea haunted the minds of its great men, and never understand why at a date so early it became academic. Let us now turn back to Giotto and see in what way he fulfills the first condition of painting as an art, which



Photo. Alinari

MADONNA AND CHILD
(Cimabue)



Photo. Alinari

MADONNA AND CHILD
(Giotto)



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condition, as we agreed, is somehow to stimulate our tactile imagination. We shall understand this without difficulty if we cover with the same glance two pictures of nearly the same subject that hang side by side in the Florence Academy, one by "Cimabue," and the other by Giotto.¹ The difference is striking, but it does not consist so much in a difference of pattern and types, as of realization. In the "Cimabue" we patiently decipher the lines and colors, and we conclude at last that they were intended to represent a woman seated, men and angels standing by or kneeling. To recognize these representations we have had to make many times the effort that the actual objects would have required, and in consequence our feeling of capacity has not only not been confirmed, but actually put in question. With what sense of relief, of rapidly rising vitality, we turn to the Giotto! Our eyes scarcely have had time to light on it before we realize it completely—the throne occupying a real space, the Virgin satisfactorily seated upon it, the angels grouped in rows about it. Our tactile imagination is put to play immediately. Our palms and fingers accompany our eyes much more quickly than in presence of real objects, the sensations varying constantly with the various projections represented, as of face, torso, knees; confirming in every way our feeling of capacity for coping with things,—for life, in short. I care little that the picture endowed with the gift of evoking such feelings has faults, that the types represented do not correspond to my ideal of beauty, that the figures are too massive, and almost unarticulated; I forgive them all, because I have much better to do than to dwell upon faults.

But how does Giotto accomplish this miracle? With the simplest means, with almost rudimentary light and shade, and functional line, he contrives to render, out of all the possible

¹ Doubtless the two pictures (now in the Uffizi Gallery) which are reproduced in the accompanying plates.

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outlines, out of all the possible variations of light and shade that a given figure may have, only those that we must isolate for special attention when we are actually realizing it. This determines his types, his schemes of color, even his compositions. He aims at types which both in face and figure are simple, large-boned, and massive,—types, that is to say, which in actual life would furnish the most powerful stimulus to the tactile imagination. Obligated to get the utmost out of his rudimentary light and shade, he makes his scheme of color of the lightest that his contrasts may be of the strongest. In his compositions, he aims at clearness of grouping, so that each important figure may have its desired tactile value. Note in the “Madonna” we have been looking at, how the shadows compel us to realize every concavity, and the lights every convexity, and how, with the play of the two, under the guidance of line, we realize the significant parts of each figure, whether draped or undraped. Nothing here but has its architectonic reason. Above all, every line is functional; that is to say, charged with purpose. Its existence, its direction, is absolutely determined by the need of rendering the tactile values. Follow any line here, say in the figure of the angel kneeling to the left, and see how it outlines and models, how it enables you to realize the head, the torso, the hips, the legs, the feet, and how its direction, its tension, is always determined by the action. There is not a genuine fragment of Giotto in existence but has these qualities, and to such a degree that the worst treatment has not been able to spoil them. Witness the resurrected frescoes in Santa Croce at Florence!

The rendering of tactile values once recognized as the most important specifically artistic quality of Giotto’s work, and as his personal contribution to the art of painting, we are all the better fitted to appreciate his more obvious though less peculiar merits—merits, I must add, which would seem far

less extraordinary if it were not for the high plane of reality on which Giotto keeps us. Now what is back of this power of raising us to a higher plane of reality but a genius for grasping and communicating real significance? What is it to render the tactile values of an object but to communicate its material significance? A painter who, after generations of mere manufacturers of symbols, illustrations, and allegories had the power to render the material significance of the objects he painted, must, as a man, have had a profound sense of the significant. No matter, then, what his theme, Giotto feels its real significance and communicates as much of it as the general limitations of his art, and of his own skill permit. When the theme is sacred story, it is scarcely necessary to point out with what processional gravity, with what hieratic dignity, with what sacramental intentness he endows it; the eloquence of the greatest critics has here found a darling subject. But let us look a moment at certain of his symbols in the Arena at Padua, at the "Inconstancy," the "Injustice," the "Avarice," for instance. "What are the significant traits," he seems to have asked himself, "in the appearance and action of a person under the exclusive domination of one of these vices? Let me paint the person with these traits, and I shall have a figure that perforce must call up the vice in question." So he paints "Inconstancy" as a woman with a blank face, her arms held out aimlessly, her torso falling backwards, her feet on the side of a wheel. It makes one giddy to look at her. "Injustice" is a powerfully built man in the vigor of his years, dressed in the costume of a judge, with his left hand clenching the hilt of his sword, and his clawed right hand grasping a double-hooked lance. His cruel eye is sternly on the watch, and his attitude is one of alert readiness to spring in all his giant force upon his prey. He sits enthroned on a rock, overtowering the tall waving trees, and below him his underlings are stripping and murdering a wayfarer. "Avarice"

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is a horned hag with ears like trumpets. A snake issuing from her mouth curls back and bites her forehead. Her left hand clutches her money-bag, as she moves forward stealthily, her right hand ready to shut down on whatever it can grasp. No need to label them: as long as these vices exist, for so long has Giotto extracted and presented their visible significance.

Still another exemplification of his sense for the significant is furnished by his treatment of action and movement. The grouping, the gestures never fail to be just such as will most rapidly convey the meaning. So with the significant line, the significant light and shade, the significant look up or down, and the significant gesture, with means technically of the simplest, and, be it remembered, with no knowledge of anatomy, Giotto conveys a complete sense of motion such as we get in his Paduan frescoes of the "Resurrection of the Blessed," of the "Ascension of our Lord," of the God the Father in the "Baptism," or the angel in "Zachariah's Dream."

This, then, is Giotto's claim to everlasting appreciation as an artist: that his thoroughgoing sense for the significant in the visible world enabled him so to represent things that we realize his representations more quickly and more completely than we should realize the things themselves, thus giving us that confirmation of our sense of capacity which is so great a source of pleasure.

II

THOUGHTS AND MAXIMS

All truly wise thoughts have been thought already thousands of times; but to make them really ours we must think them over again honestly, till they take firm root in our personal experience.

—GOETHE (translated by John Stuart Blackie)

Let us endeavor to see things as they are, and then inquire whether we ought to complain. Whether to see life as it is will give us much consolation, I know not; but the consolation which is drawn from truth, if any there be, is solid and durable: that which may be derived from error, must be, like its original, fallacious and fugitive.

—SAMUEL JOHNSON

Pascal

LET man then contemplate the whole of nature in her full and grand majesty, and turn his vision from the low objects which surround him. Let him gaze on that brilliant light, set like an eternal lamp to illumine the universe; let the earth appear to him a point in comparison with the vast circle described by the sun; and let him wonder at the fact that this vast circle is itself but a very fine point in comparison with that described by the stars in their revolution round the firmament. But if our view be arrested there, let our imagination pass beyond; it will sooner exhaust the power of conception than nature that of supplying material for conception. The whole visible world is only an imperceptible atom in the ample bosom of nature. No idea approaches it. We may enlarge our conceptions beyond all imaginable space; we only produce atoms in comparison with the reality of things. It is an infinite sphere, the center of which is everywhere, the circumference nowhere. In short it is the greatest sensible mark of the almighty power of God, that imagination loses itself in that thought.

Returning to himself, let man consider what he is in comparison with all existence; let him regard himself as lost in this remote corner of nature; and from the little cell in which he finds himself lodged—I mean the universe—let him estimate at their true value the earth, kingdoms, cities, and himself. What is a man in the Infinite?

¹ Selected passages, sometimes grouped without regard to any standard arrangement. The translation is substantially—a few paragraphs excepted—that of W. F. Trotter, and is reprinted with the permission of J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., and with the concurrence of E. P. Dutton & Company.

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But to show him another prodigy equally astonishing, let him examine the most delicate things he knows. Let a mite be given him, with its minute body and parts incomparably more minute, limbs with their joints, veins in the limbs, blood in the veins, humors in the blood, drops in the humors, vapors in the drops. Dividing these last things again, let him exhaust his powers of conception, and let the last object at which he can arrive be now that of our discourse. Perhaps he will think that here is the smallest point in nature. I will let him see therein a new abyss. I will paint for him not only the visible universe, but all that he can conceive of nature's immensity in the womb of this abridged atom. Let him see therein an infinity of universes, each of which has its firmament, its planets, its earth, in the same proportion as in the visible world; in each earth animals, and in the last mites, in which he will find again all that the first had, finding still in these others the same thing without end and without cessation. Let him lose himself in wonders as amazing in their littleness as the others in their vastness. For who will not be astounded at the fact that our body, which a little ago was imperceptible in the universe, itself imperceptible in the bosom of the whole, is now a colossus, a world, or rather a whole, in respect of the nothingness which we cannot reach? He who regards himself in this light will be afraid of himself, and observing himself sustained in the body given him by nature between those two abysses of the Infinite and Nothing, will tremble at the sight of these marvels; and I think that, as his curiosity changes into admiration, he will be more disposed to contemplate them in silence than to examine them with presumption.

For in fact what is man in nature? A Nothing in comparison with the Infinite, an All in comparison with the Nothing, a mean between nothing and everything. Since

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he is infinitely removed from comprehending the extremes, the end of things and their beginning are hopelessly hidden from him in an impenetrable secret; he is equally incapable of seeing the Nothing from which he was made, and the Infinite in which he is swallowed up.

What will he do, then, but perceive the appearance of the middle of things, in an eternal despair of knowing either their beginning or their end? All things proceed from the Nothing, and are borne towards the Infinite. Who will follow these marvelous processes? The Author of these wonders understands them. None other can do so.

Our intellect holds the same position in the world of thought as our body occupies in the expanse of nature.

Limited as we are in every way, this state which holds the mean between two extremes is present in all our impotence. Our senses perceive no extreme. Too much sound deafens us; too much light dazzles us; too great distance or proximity hinders our view. Too great length and too great brevity of discourse tend to obscurity; too much truth is paralyzing. First principles are too self-evident for us; too much pleasure disagrees with us. Too many concords are annoying in music; too many benefits irritate us; we wish to have the wherewithal to overpay our debts. We feel neither extreme heat nor extreme cold. Excessive qualities are prejudicial to us and not perceptible by the senses; we do not feel but suffer them. Extreme youth and extreme age hinder the mind, as also too much and too little education. In short, extremes are for us as though they were not, and we are not within their notice. They escape us, or we them.

This is our true state; this is what makes us incapable of certain knowledge and of absolute ignorance. We sail within a vast sphere, ever drifting in uncertainty, driven from end to end. When we think to attach ourselves to any point and

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to fasten to it, it wavers and leaves us; and if we follow it, it eludes our grasp, slips past us, and vanishes forever. Nothing stays for us. This is our natural condition, and yet most contrary to our inclination; we burn with desire to find solid ground and an ultimate sure foundation whereon to build a tower reaching to the Infinite. But our whole groundwork cracks, and the earth opens to abysses.

2 When I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after, the little space which I fill, and even can see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces of which I am ignorant, and which know me not, I am frightened, and am astonished at being here rather than there; for there is no reason why here rather than there, why now rather than then. Who has put me here? By whose order and direction have this place and time been allotted to me? *Memoria hospitis unius diei prætereuntis.*¹

3 The eternal silence of those infinite spaces fills me with terror.

4 The mind of this sovereign judge of the world [that is, man] is not so independent that it is not liable to be disturbed by the first din about it. The noise of a cannon is not necessary to hinder its thoughts; it needs only the creaking of a weather-cock or a pulley. Do not wonder if at present it does not reason well; a fly is buzzing in its ears; that is enough to render it incapable of good judgment. If you wish it to be able to reach the truth, chase away that animal which holds its reason in check and disturbs that powerful intellect which rules towns and kingdoms. Here is a comical god! "O most ridiculous hero!"

¹ . . . the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day. (*Wisdom of Solomon*, V, 14.)

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5 Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature, but he is a thinking reed. The entire universe need not arm itself to crush him. A vapor, a drop of water suffices to kill him. But, if the universe were to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which killed him, because he knows that he dies and the advantage which the universe has over him; of this the universe knows nothing.

All our dignity consists then in thought. By it we must elevate ourselves, and not by space and time which we cannot fill. Let us endeavor then to think well; this is the principle of morality.

6 It [the imagination] is that deceitful part in man, that mistress of error and falsity, the more deceptive that she is not always so; for she would be an infallible rule of truth, if she were an infallible rule of falsehood. But being most generally false, she gives no sign of her nature, impressing the same character on the true and the false.

I do not speak of fools, I speak of the wisest men; and it is among them that the imagination has the great gift of persuasion. Reason protests in vain; it cannot set a true value on things.

This arrogant power, the enemy of reason, who likes to rule and dominate it, has established in man a second nature to show how all-powerful she is. She makes men happy and sad, healthy and sick, rich and poor; she compels reason to believe, doubt, and deny; she blunts the senses, or quickens them; she has her fools and sages; and nothing vexes us more than to see that she fills her devotees with a satisfaction far more full and entire than does reason. Those who have a lively imagination are a great deal more pleased with themselves than the wise can reasonably be. They look down upon men with haughtiness; they argue with boldness and confidence, others with fear and diffidence; and this gayety of

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countenance often gives them the advantage in the opinion of the hearers, such favor have the imaginary wise in the eyes of judges of like nature. Imagination cannot make fools wise; but she can make them happy, to the envy of reason, which can only make its friends miserable; the one covers them with glory, the other with shame.

If the greatest philosopher in the world find himself upon a plank wider than is actually necessary, but hanging over a precipice, his imagination will prevail, though his reason convince him of his safety. Many cannot bear the thought without a cold sweat. I will not state all its effects.

Everyone knows that the sight of cats or rats, the crushing of a coal, etc., may unhinge the reason. The tone of voice affects the wisest, and changes the force of a discourse or a poem.

Love or hate alters the aspect of justice. How much greater confidence has an advocate, retained with a large fee, in the justice of his cause! How much better does his bold manner make his case appear to the judges, deceived as they are by appearances! How ludicrous is reason, blown with a breath in every direction!

We cannot even see an advocate in his robe and with his cap on his head, without a favorable opinion of his ability. The imagination disposes of everything; it makes beauty, justice, and happiness, which are everything in the world. I should much like to see an Italian work, of which I only know the title, which alone is worth many books, *Della opinione regina del mondo*.¹ I approve of the book without knowing it, save the evil in it, if any.

These are pretty much the effects of that deceptive faculty, which seems to have been expressly given us to lead us into necessary error. We have, however, many other sources of error.

Our own interest is a marvelous instrument for nicely put-

¹ Concerning Opinion, Queen of the World.

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ting out our eyes. The justest man in the world is not allowed to be judge in his own cause; I know some who, in order not to fall into this self-love, have been perfectly unjust out of opposition. The sure way of losing a just cause has been to get it recommended to these men by their near relatives.

Justice and truth are two such subtle points, that our tools are too blunt to touch them accurately. If they reach the point, they either crush it, or lean all round, more on the false than on the true.

7 The art of persuading consists as much in the art of being agreeable as in that of being convincing, so much more are men governed by caprice than by reason!

8 Vanity is so anchored in the heart of man that a soldier, a soldier's servant, a cook, a porter, brags, and wishes to have his admirers. Even philosophers wish for them. Those who write against vanity want to have the glory of having written well; and those who read what is thus written desire the glory of having read it. I who write this have perhaps this desire, and perhaps those who will read me . . .

We are so presumptuous that we would wish to be known by all the world, even by people who shall come after, when we shall be no more; and we are so vain that the esteem of five or six neighbors delights and contents us.

The nature of self-love and of this human ego is to love self only and consider self only. But what will man do? He cannot prevent this object that he loves from being full of faults and wants. He wants to be great, and he sees himself small. He wants to be happy, and he sees himself miserable. He wants to be perfect, and he sees himself full of imperfections. He wants to be the object of love and esteem among men, and he sees that his faults merit only their hatred

and contempt. This embarrassment in which he finds himself produces in him the most unrighteous and criminal passion that can be imagined; for he conceives a mortal enmity against truth which reproves him, and which convinces him of his faults. He would annihilate it, but, unable to destroy it in its essence, he destroys it as far as possible in his own knowledge and in that of others; that is to say, he devotes all his attention to hiding his faults both from others and from himself, and he cannot endure either that others should point them out to him, or that they should see them.

Truly it is an evil to be full of faults; but it is a still greater evil to be full of them, and to be unwilling to recognize them, since that is to add the further fault of a voluntary illusion. We do not like others to deceive us; we do not think it fair that they should be held in higher esteem by us than they deserve; it is not then fair that we should deceive them, and should wish them to esteem us more highly than we deserve.

Thus, when they discover only the imperfections and vices which we really have, it is plain they do us no wrong, since it is not they who cause them; they rather do us good, since they help us to free ourselves from an evil, namely, the ignorance of these imperfections. We ought not to be angry at their knowing our faults and despising us; it is but right that they should know us for what we are, and should despise us, if we are contemptible.

Such are the feelings that would arise in a heart full of equity and justice. What must we say then of our own heart, when we see in it a wholly different disposition? For is it not true that we hate truth and those who tell it us, and that we like them to be deceived in our favor, and prefer to be esteemed by them as being other than what we are in fact?

There are different degrees in this aversion to truth; but all may perhaps be said to have it in some degree, because

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it is inseparable from self-love. It is this false delicacy which makes those who are under the necessity of reproving others choose so many windings and middle courses to avoid offense. They must lessen our faults, appear to excuse them, intersperse praises and evidence of love and esteem. Despite all this, the medicine does not cease to be bitter to self-love. It takes as little as it can, always with disgust, and often with a secret spite against those who administer it.

Hence it happens that if any have some interest in being loved by us, they are averse to render us a service which they know to be disagreeable. They treat us as we wish to be treated. We hate the truth, and they hide it from us. We desire flattery, and they flatter us. We like to be deceived, and they deceive us.

So each degree of good fortune which raises us in the world removes us further from truth, because we are most afraid of wounding those whose affection is most useful and whose dislike is most dangerous. A prince may be the byword of all Europe, and he alone will know nothing of it. I am not astonished; to tell the truth is useful to whom it is spoken, but disadvantageous to those who tell it, because it makes them disliked. Now those who live with princes love their own interests more than that of the prince whom they serve; and so they take care not to confer on him a benefit so as to injure themselves.

This evil is no doubt greater and more common among the higher classes; but the lower are not exempt from it, since there is always some advantage in making men love us. Human life is thus only a perpetual illusion; men deceive and flatter each other. No one speaks of us in our presence as he does of us in our absence. Human society is founded on mutual deceit; few friendships would endure if each knew what his friend said of him in his absence, although he then spoke in sincerity and without passion.

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Man is then only disguise, falsehood, and hypocrisy, both in himself and in regard to others. He does not wish any one to tell him the truth; he avoids telling it to others, and all these dispositions, so removed from justice and reason, have a natural root in his heart.

He who will know fully the vanity of man has only to consider the causes and effects of love. The cause of it is an *I know not what* (Corneille), and the effects are dreadful. This *I know not what*, so small an object that we cannot recognize it, agitates a whole country, princes, armies, the entire world.—Cleopatra's nose: had it been shorter, the whole aspect of the world would have been altered.

9 The charm of fame is so great, that we like every object to which it is attached, even death.

10 Methinks Cæsar was too old to set about amusing himself with conquering the world. Such sport was good for Augustus or Alexander. They were still young men, and thus difficult to restrain. But Cæsar should have been more mature.

11 We do not rest satisfied with the present. We anticipate the future as too slow in coming, as if in order to hasten its course; or we recall the past, to stop its too rapid flight. So imprudent are we that we wander in the times which are not ours, and do not think of the only one which belongs to us; and so idle are we that we dream of those times which are no more, and thoughtlessly overlook that which alone exists. For the present is generally painful to us. We conceal it from our sight, because it troubles us; and if it be delightful to us, we regret to see it pass away. We try to sustain it by the future, and think of arranging matters which

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are not in our power, for a time which we have no certainty of reaching.

Let each one examine his thoughts, and he will find them all occupied with the past and the future. We scarcely ever think of the present; and if we think of it, it is only to take light from it to arrange the future. The present is never our end. The past and the present are our means; the future alone is our end. So we never live, but we hope to live; and, as we are always preparing to be happy, it is inevitable we should never be so.¹

12 Let us imagine a number of men in chains, and all condemned to death, where some are killed each day in the sight of others, and those who remain see their own fate in that of their fellows, and wait their turn, looking at each other sorrowfully and without hope. It is an image of the condition of men.

13 The last act is tragic, however happy all the rest of the play; at the last a little earth is thrown upon our head, and that is the end forever.

14 Nothing is so insufferable to man as to be completely at rest, without passions, without business, without diversion, without study. He then feels his nothingness, his forlornness, his insufficiency, his dependence, his weakness, his emptiness. There will immediately arise from the depth of his heart weariness, gloom, sadness, fretfulness, vexation, despair.

When I have occasionally set myself to consider the different distractions of men, the pains and perils to which they expose themselves at court or in war, whence arise so many quarrels, passions, bold and often bad ventures, I have dis-

¹ La Bruyère remarks that children have neither past nor future, but that, unlike adults, they enjoy the present.

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covered that all the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber. A man who has enough to live on, if he knew how to stay with pleasure at home would not leave it to go to sea or to besiege a stronghold. A commission in the army would not be bought so dearly but that it is found insufferable not to budge from the town; and men only seek conversation and entertaining games because they cannot remain with pleasure at home.

But on further consideration, when, after finding the cause of all our ills, I have sought to discover the reason of it, I have found that there is one very real reason, namely, the natural poverty of our feeble and mortal condition, so miserable that nothing can comfort us when we think of it closely.

Whatever condition we picture to ourselves, if we muster all the good things which it is possible to possess, royalty is the finest station in the world. Yet, when we imagine a king attended with every pleasure he can feel, if he be without diversion, and be left to consider and reflect on what he is, this feeble happiness will not sustain him; he will necessarily fall into forebodings of dangers, of revolutions which may happen, and, finally, of death and inevitable disease; so that if he be without what is called diversion, he is unhappy, and more unhappy than the least of his subjects who plays and diverts himself.

Hence it comes that men so much love noise and stir; hence it comes that prison is so horrible a punishment; hence it comes that the pleasure of solitude is a thing incomprehensible. And it is in fact the greatest source of happiness in the condition of kings, that men try incessantly to divert them, and to procure for them all kinds of pleasures.

This [diversion] is all that men have been able to discover to make themselves happy. And those who philosophize on the matter, and who think men unreasonable for spending a whole day in chasing a hare which they would not have

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bought, scarce know our nature. The hare in itself would not screen us from the sight of death and calamities; but the chase which turns away our attention from these does screen us.

And thus, when we take the exception against them, that what they seek with such fervor cannot satisfy them, if they replied—as they should do if they considered the matter thoroughly—that they sought in it only a violent and impetuous occupation which turned their thoughts from self, and that they therefore chose an attractive object to charm and ardently allure them, they would leave their opponents without a reply. But they do not make this reply, because they do not know themselves. They do not know that it is the chase, and not the quarry, which they seek.

They imagine that if they obtained such and such a post, they would then rest with pleasure, and are insensible of the insatiable nature of their desire. They think they are truly seeking quiet, and they are only seeking excitement.

They have a secret instinct which impels them to seek amusement and occupation abroad, and which arises from the sense of their constant unhappiness. They have another secret instinct, a remnant of the greatness of our original nature, which teaches them that happiness in reality consists only in rest, and not in stir. And of these two contrary instincts they form within themselves a confused idea, which hides itself from their view in the depths of their soul, inciting them to aim at rest through excitement, and always to fancy that the satisfaction which they have not will come to them, if, by surmounting whatever difficulties confront them, they can therefore open the door to rest.

Thus passes away all man's life. Men seek rest in a struggle against difficulties; and when they have conquered these, rest becomes insufferable. For we think either of the misfortunes we have or of those which threaten us. And even if we should

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see ourselves sufficiently sheltered on all sides, weariness of its own accord would not fail to arise from the depths of the heart wherein it has its natural roots, and to fill the mind with its poison.

Thus so wretched is man that he would weary even without any cause for weariness from the peculiar state of his disposition; and so frivolous is he, that, though full of a thousand reasons for weariness, the least thing, such as playing billiards or hitting a ball, is sufficient to amuse him.

15 The only thing which consoles us for our miseries is diversion, and yet this is the greatest of our miseries. For it is this which principally hinders us from reflecting upon ourselves, and which makes us insensibly ruin ourselves. Without this we should be in a state of weariness, and this weariness would spur us to seek a more solid means of escaping from it. But diversion amuses us, and leads us unconsciously to death.

16 All men desire to be happy; to this there is no exception. However diverse the means they employ, they all are seeking this goal. What causes some to go to the wars and others to stay at home is this same desire, which they all have in common, accompanied by different views. Our will never makes the slightest motion except toward this object. It is the motive of all the actions of all men, even of those who hang themselves.

And yet, after so great a number of years, never, without religion, has anyone arrived at this point toward which all perpetually aim. All complain: princes, subjects; nobles, plebeians; old, young; strong, weak; wise, ignorant; well, sick; of all lands, of all times, of all ages, and of all conditions.

A trial so long, so uninterrupted, and so uniform, ought indeed to convince us of our impotence to attain to happiness.

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through our own efforts; but example teaches us little. The old case is never so like the new that there is not some delicate difference between them, and it is because of this difference that we expect our new dream will not fail us as did the old. And thus the present never satisfying us, hope lures us on, and from unhappiness to unhappiness conducts us even to death, which of all unhappiness is the eternal consummation.

What, then, cries out to us this eager desire and this powerlessness—if not that there was formerly in man a true happiness, whereof there now remains to him only the void it has left. This he tries in vain to fill up with all that surrounds him, seeking in absent things the help he does not find in things present, but to no avail, because the infinite gulf can be filled only by an object infinite and immutable, that is to say, only by God himself.

17 It is dangerous to make man see too clearly his equality with the brutes without showing him his greatness. It is also dangerous to make him see his greatness too clearly, apart from his vileness. It is still more dangerous to leave him in ignorance of both. But it is very advantageous to show him both.

18 The strength of a man's virtue must not be measured by his efforts,¹ but by his ordinary life.

19 Notwithstanding the sight of all our miseries, which press upon us and take us by the throat, we have an instinct which we cannot repress, and which lifts us up.

20 It is natural for the mind to believe and for the will

¹ That is, evidently, by his *exceptional* efforts, by what he may rise to on special occasions.

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to love, and so it is that in the absence of true objects they necessarily attach themselves to false.

21 It is not in things extraordinary and bizarre that excellence, in whatever line, is to be found. We strive upward in order to come at it—only to get farther away; oftenest what is needed is that we should stoop down. The best books are those which those who read think they themselves might have written. Nature, which alone is excellent, is altogether familiar and common.

22 No one passes in the world as skilled in verse unless he has put up the sign of a poet; [as] a mathematician, etc. But educated people do not want a sign, and draw little distinction between the trade of a poet and that of an embroiderer.

People of education are not called poets or mathematicians, etc.; but they are all these, and judges of all these. No one guesses what they are. When they come into society, they talk on matters about which the rest are talking. We do not observe in them one quality rather than another, save when they have to make use of it. But then we remember it, for it is characteristic of such persons that we do not say of them that they are fine speakers, when it is not a question of oratory, and that we say of them that they are fine speakers, when it is such a question.

It is therefore to give a man false praise to say of him, on his entry, that he is a very clever poet; and it is a bad sign when a man is not asked to give his judgment on poetry.

23 I spent a long time in the study of the abstract sciences, and was disheartened by the small number of fellow-students in them. When I commenced the study of man, I saw that these abstract sciences are not suited to man, and that I was wandering further from my own state in examining them,

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than others in not knowing them. I pardoned their little knowledge; but I thought at least to find companions in the study of man, and that it was the true study which is suited to him. I have been deceived; still fewer study it than geometry. It is only from want of knowing how to study this that we seek the other studies. But is it not that even here is not the knowledge which man should have, and that for the purposes of happiness it is better for him not to know himself?

24 Men are never taught to be gentlemen, and are taught everything else; and they never plume themselves so much on the rest of their knowledge as on knowing how to be gentlemen. They only plume themselves on knowing the one thing they do not know.

La Rochefoucauld

SELF-LOVE is the greatest of all flatterers.

2 The passions are the only orators that always persuade: they are, as it were, a natural art, the rules of which are infallible; and the simplest man with passion is more persuasive than the most eloquent without it.

3 Our self-love endures with greater impatience the condemnation of our tastes than of our opinions.

4 We have all of us sufficient fortitude to bear the misfortunes of others.

5 Philosophy triumphs easily over past and future evils, but present evils triumph over it.

6 It requires greater virtues to support good fortune than bad.

7 We often make a parade of passions, even of the most criminal; but envy is a timid and shameful passion which we never dare to avow.

8 We have more power than will; and it is often by way of excuse to ourselves that we fancy things are impossible.

¹ Selected. The translation is—substantially—that published by A. Wessels Company, New York, 1908.

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9 If we had no faults ourselves, we should not take so much pleasure in remarking them in others.

10 Pride has a greater share than goodness of heart in the remonstrances we make to those who are guilty of faults; we reprove not so much with a view to correct them as to persuade them that we are exempt from those faults ourselves.

11 Those who bestow too much application on trifling things become generally incapable of great ones.

12 Happiness lies in the taste, and not in things; and it is from having what we desire that we are happy—not from having what others think desirable.

13 Nothing ought so much to diminish the good opinion we have of ourselves as to see that we disapprove at one time what we approve at another.

14 A clever man should regulate his interests, and place them in proper order. Our avidity often deranges them by inducing us to undertake too many things at once; and by grasping at minor objects, we lose our hold of more important ones.

15 There is no disguise which can long conceal love where it does, or feign it where it does not, exist.

16 It is with true love as with apparitions. Everyone talks of it, but few have ever seen it.

17 The reason we are so changeable in our friendships is, that it is difficult to know the qualities of the heart, while it is easy to know those of the head.

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18 It is more disgraceful to distrust one's friends than to be deceived by them.

19 Self-love increases or diminishes in our eyes the good qualities of our friends in proportion to the satisfaction we derive from them, and we judge of their merits by the kind of intercourse which they keep up with us.

20 Everyone complains of his memory, and no one complains of his judgment.

21 How can we expect another to keep our secret if we cannot keep it ourselves?

22 There are no people who are so troublesome to others as the indolent; when they have satisfied their indolence they wish to appear diligent.

23 Politeness of mind consists in the conception of honorable and delicate thoughts.

24 The head is always the dupe of the heart.

25 To know things well, we should know them in their details; but as their details are almost infinite, our knowledge is always superficial and imperfect.

26 It is as easy to deceive oneself without perceiving it as it is difficult to deceive others without their perceiving it.

27 Nothing is less sincere than the method of asking and giving advice. The man who asks it appears to have a respectful deference for the opinion of his friend, while he intends to make him approve of his own; and he who gives

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the advice repays the confidence shown in him by an ardent and disinterested zeal, though, in the advice he gives, he has generally nothing in view but his own interest or fame.

28 The true method of being deceived is to think oneself more cunning than others.

29 It is easier to be wise for others than for ourselves.

30 We are never rendered so ridiculous by the qualities we have as by those we affect to have.

31 One thing which makes us find so few people who appear reasonable and agreeable in conversation is, that there is scarcely anyone who does not think more of what he is about to say than of answering precisely what is said to him. The cleverest and most complaisant people content themselves with merely showing an attentive countenance, while we can see in their eyes and minds a wandering from what is said to them, and an impatience to return to what they wish to say; they do not reflect that it is a bad method of pleasing or persuading others, to be so studious of pleasing oneself, and that listening well and answering well are among the greatest perfections that can be attained in conversation.

32 As it is the characteristic of great wits to convey a great deal in a few words, so, on the contrary, small wits have the gift of speaking much and saying nothing.

33 Few people are wise enough to prefer useful reproof to treacherous praise.

34 The glory of men should always be proportioned to the means they have employed to acquire it.

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35 It is not sufficient to have great qualities; we must be able to make proper use of them.

36 The art of being able to make a good use of moderate abilities wins esteem, and often confers more reputation than real merit.

37 The world more often rewards the appearance of merit than it does merit itself.

38 The first movement of joy which we experience at the good fortune of our friends does not always arise from the goodness of our nature, nor from the affection we have for them. It is more often a result of self-love which flatters us with the hope of being fortunate in our turn, or of deriving some advantage from their good fortune.

39 Our repentance is not so much regret for the evil we have done, as fear of its consequences to us.

40 For the credit of virtue it must be admitted that the greatest evils which befall mankind are caused by their crimes.

41 It may be said that the vices await us in the journey of life like hosts with whom we must successively lodge; and I doubt whether experience would make us avoid them if we were to travel the same road a second time.

42 We easily forget our faults when they are only known to ourselves.

43 The generality of people judge of men only by the vogue they enjoy or by their fortunes.

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44 Perfect valor is to do unwitnessed what we should be capable of doing before all the world.

45 Hypocrisy is the homage which vice pays to virtue.

46 In the adversity of our best friends we often find something which does not displease us.

47 True eloquence consists in saying all that is necessary, and nothing but what is necessary.

48 Gravity is a mystery of the body, invented to conceal the defects of the mind.

49 Pity is often a perception of our own misfortunes in those of others; it is a shrewd foresight of the evils into which we may fall. We succor others in order to engage them to succor us in similar circumstances; and the services we render them are, to speak properly, a good which we do to ourselves by anticipation.

50 It is deceiving ourselves to fancy that it is only the violent passions, such as ambition and love, which can triumph over the others. Indolence, languid as it is, nevertheless is frequently their master; it spreads its dominion over all the designs and all the actions of life, and thus destroys and insensibly consumes the passions and the virtues.

51 We have more indolence in the mind than in the body.

52 Youth is perpetual intoxication; it is the fever of reason.

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53 Good nature, which boasts of so much sensibility, is often overcome by the most petty interest.

54 We always love those who admire us, and we do not always love those whom we admire.

55 Almost everyone takes a pleasure in requiting trifling obligations; many people are grateful for moderate ones; but there is scarcely anyone who does not show ingratitude for great ones.

56 Whatever people say in our praise, they never teach us anything new.

57 We often pardon those who bore us, but we cannot pardon those whom we bore.

58 Why must we have memory enough to retain even the minutest details of what has happened to us, and not enough to remember how many times we have told them to the same person?

59 The extreme pleasure we take in talking of ourselves should make us fear that we give very little to those who listen to us.

60 We confess our little faults only to persuade others that we have no great ones.

61 We sometimes fancy that we hate flattery, but in reality we only hate the manner of flattering.

62 The accent of a man's native country dwells in his mind and in his heart as well as in his speech.

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63 We think very few people sensible except those who are of our opinion.

64 The generality of young people fancy that they are natural, when they are only ill-bred and coarse.

65 Minds of moderate caliber ordinarily condemn everything which is beyond their range.

66 What renders the vanity of others insupportable is that it wounds our own.

67 We have not courage to say, as a general proposition, that we have no faults, and our enemies no good qualities; but, in detail, we are not far from thinking so.

68 Nothing so much prevents our being natural as the desire of appearing so.

69 The calm or agitation of our temper does not depend so much on the important events of life, as on an agreeable or disagreeable adjustment of little things which happen every day.

70 It is a proof of very little friendship not to notice a cooling in that of our friends.

71 There are no fools so distressing as those that have parts.

72 The most disinterested friendship is only a relation wherein our self-love contemplates some gain.

Vauvenargues

WE should be more tolerant of the ideas contained in a piece of writing if we conceived them in the same way as their author.

2 Rapid fortunes of any kind are the least solid, because they are rarely the result of merit. The perfect but laborious outcome of prudence is always of tardy growth.

3 It is proof of a narrow mind to distinguish things worthy of esteem from things worthy of love. Great minds naturally love whatever is worthy of their esteem.

4 The law of the mind is not different from that of the body, which can only be supported by continual nourishment.

5 Those who laugh at serious tastes have a serious affection for trifles.

6 Great men in teaching weak men to reflect have set them on the road of error.

7 It is not true that equality is a law of nature. Nature has made nothing equal; her sovereign law is subordination and dependence.

8 Great resources of mind and heart are needed to enjoy sincerity when it wounds, or to practice it without giving

¹ Selected. The translation is—substantially—that of Elizabeth Lee, and is reprinted with the permission of Constable and Company, Limited.

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offense: few men have depth enough to hear or to tell the truth.

9 Men are not to be judged by what they do not know, but by what they know, and by the manner in which they know it.

10 We are too inattentive or too much occupied with ourselves to understand each other. Whoever has seen masks at a ball dance amicably together, and hold hands without knowing each other, to part the moment after to see each other no more, nor to regret each other, can form some idea of society.

11 When we are convinced of some great truth, and feel our conviction keenly, we must not fear to express it, although others have said it before us. Every thought is new when an author expresses it in a manner peculiar to himself.

12 If a man is endowed with a noble and courageous soul, if he is painstaking, proud, ambitious, without meanness, of a profound and deep-seated intelligence, I dare assert that he lacks nothing to be neglected by the great and men in high office, who fear, more than other men, those whom they cannot dominate.

13 The best things are the most common. You can purchase the mind of Pascal for a crown. Pleasures even cheaper are sold to those who give themselves up to them. It is only luxuries and objects of caprice that are rare and difficult to obtain; unfortunately they are the only things that touch the curiosity and taste of ordinary men.

14 We are not always as unjust to our enemies as we are to our relations.

15 One does not gain much by mere cleverness.

Joseph Joubert

HAPPINESS is to feel that one's soul is good; there is no other, in truth, and this kind of happiness may exist even in sorrow, so that there are griefs preferable to every joy, and such as would be preferred by all those who have felt them.

2 One is not obliged to be a servant of society, if one serves it as a model.

3 How many things one says spontaneously in conversation that would never occur to one who aimed only at knowing a subject without discussing it! The mind warms up, and its heat produces things that we should never get from its light alone.

4 To the liberal ideas of our age we must oppose the moral ideas of the ages.²

5 We are forever craving new books, and yet in those we have long possessed there are priceless treasures of wisdom and of beauty that are lost to us because of our neglect. The worst thing about new books is that they keep us from reading the old ones.

¹ Selected. The "Thoughts" numbered 8-12, inclusive, are quoted from Matthew Arnold's essay on Joubert; those numbered 13-17, inclusive, from the chapter on Joubert in Irving Babbitt's *Masters of Modern French Criticism*. The latter are reprinted with the consent of Mr. Babbitt, and by permission of, and by special arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

² Compare Goethe's saying, that we should endeavor to oppose to the aberrations of the hour the masses of universal history.

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6 Our ancestors judged books by the standards of taste, conscience, and reason. We judge them by the emotions they inspire. Can this book help us or hurt us? Is it fitted to perfect or to corrupt our minds? Will it do us good or harm? These are the great questions which they asked. We ask: Will it amuse us?

7 There has never been an age in literature whose ruling taste was not diseased. The success of great writers consists in rendering palatable to sickly tastes works that are sound and sane.

8 It is by means of familiar words that style takes hold of the reader and gets possession of him. It is by means of these that great thoughts get currency and pass for true metal, like gold and silver which have had a recognized stamp put upon them. They beget confidence in the man who, in order to make his thoughts more clearly perceived, uses them; for people feel that such an employment of the language of common human life betokens a man who knows that life and its concerns, and who keeps himself in contact with them. Besides, these words make a style frank and easy. They show that an author has long made the thought or the feeling expressed his mental food; that he has so assimilated them and familiarized them, that the most common expressions suffice him in order to express ideas which have become every-day ideas to him by the length of time they have been in his mind. And lastly, what one says in such words looks more true; for, of all the words in use, none are so clear as those which we call common words; and clearness is so eminently one of the characteristics of truth, that often it even passes for truth itself.

9 With the fever of the senses, the delirium of the passions, the weakness of the spirit; with the storms of the

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passing time and with the great scourges of human life,—hunger, thirst, dishonor, diseases, and death,—authors may as long as they like go on making novels which shall harrow our hearts; but the soul says all the while, “You hurt me.”

10 Fiction has no business to exist unless it is more beautiful than reality. Certainly the monstrosities of fiction may be found in the booksellers’ shops; you buy them there for a certain number of francs, and you talk of them for a certain number of days; but they have no place in literature, because in literature the one aim of art is the beautiful. Once lose sight of that, and you have the mere frightful reality.

11 Liberty! liberty! in all things let us have *justice*, and then we shall have enough liberty.

12 The man of imagination without learning has wings and no feet.

13 I love few pictures, few operas, few statues, few poems, and yet I am a great lover of the arts.

14 Without delicacy there is no literature.

15 What is exquisite is better than what is ample.

16 To write well a man should have a natural facility and an acquired difficulty.

17 How many people eat, drink, and get married; buy, sell, and build; make contracts and attend to their fortune; have friends and enemies, pleasures and pains; are born, grow up, live and die—but asleep!

Henri-Frédéric Amiel

BERLIN, July 20, 1848.—It gives liberty and breadth to thought, to learn to judge our own epoch from the point of view of universal history, history from the point of view of geological periods, geology from the point of view of astronomy. When the duration of a man's life or of a people's life appears to us as microscopic as that of a fly, and inversely, the life of a gnat as infinite as that of a celestial body, with all its dust of nations, we feel ourselves at once very small and very great, and we are able, as it were, to survey from the height of the spheres our own existence, and the little whirlwinds which agitate our little Europe.

2 In the conduct of life, habits count for more than maxims, because habit is a living maxim, become flesh and instinct. To reform one's maxims is nothing: it is but to change the title of the book. To learn new habits is everything, for it is to reach the substance of life. Life is but a tissue of habits.

3 The age of great men is going; the epoch of the ant-hill, of life in multiplicity, is beginning. The century of individualism, if abstract equality triumphs, runs a great risk of seeing no more true individuals. By continual leveling and division of labor, society will become everything and man nothing.

As the floor of valleys is raised by the denudation and

¹ From the *Journal*. The translation is by Mrs. Humphry Ward, and is reprinted with the permission of The Macmillan Company.

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washing down of the mountains, what is average will rise at the expense of what is great. The exceptional will disappear. A plateau with fewer and fewer undulations, without contrasts and without oppositions,—such will be the aspect of human society. The statistician will register a growing progress, and the moralist a gradual decline: on the one hand, a progress of things; on the other, a decline of souls. The useful will take the place of the beautiful, industry of art, political economy of religion, and arithmetic of poetry. The spleen will become the malady of a leveling age.

4 How much have we not to learn from the Greeks, those immortal ancestors of ours! And how much better they solved their problem than we have solved ours. Their ideal man is not ours, but they understood infinitely better than we how to reverence, cultivate and ennoble the man whom they knew. In a thousand respects we are still barbarians beside them, as Béranger said to me with a sigh in 1843:—barbarians in education, in eloquence, in public life, in poetry, in matters of art, etc. We must have millions of men in order to produce a few elect spirits: a thousand was enough in Greece. If the measure of a civilization is to be the number of perfected men that it produces, we are still far from this model people. The slaves are no longer below us, but they are among us. Barbarism is no longer at our frontiers; it lives side by side with us. We carry within us much greater things than they, but we ourselves are smaller. It is a strange result. Objective civilization produced great men while making no conscious effort toward such a result; subjective civilization produces a miserable and imperfect race, contrary to its mission and its earnest desire. The world grows more majestic, but man diminishes.¹

¹ "Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers . . . ,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more."
—Alfred Tennyson (*Poetry*, p. 188).

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5 An error is the more dangerous in proportion to the degree of truth which it contains.

6 Look twice, if what you want is a just conception; look once, if what you want is a sense of beauty.

7 A man only understands what is akin to something already existing in himself.

8 Nothing is more characteristic of a man than the manner in which he behaves toward fools.

9 In all the chief matters of life we are alone, and our true history is scarcely ever deciphered by others. The chief part of the drama is a monologue, or rather an intimate debate between God, our conscience, and ourselves. Tears, griefs, depressions, disappointments, irritations, good and evil thoughts, decisions, uncertainties, deliberations,—all these belong to our secret, and are almost all incommunicable and intransmissible, even when we try to speak of them, and even when we write them down. What is most precious in us never shows itself, never finds an issue even in the closest intimacy. Only a part of it reaches our consciousness; it scarcely enters into action except in prayer, and is perhaps only perceived by God, for our past rapidly becomes strange to us. Our monad may be influenced by other monads, but none the less does it remain impenetrable to them in its essence; and we ourselves, when all is said, remain outside our own mystery. The center of our consciousness is unconscious, as the kernel of the sun is dark. All that we are, desire, do, and know, is more or less superficial, and below the rays and lightnings of our periphery there remains the darkness of unfathomable substance.¹

¹ Compare Lord Houghton's "Strangers Yet," *Poetry*, p. 538.

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10 To do easily what is difficult for others is the mark of talent. To do what is impossible for talent is the mark of genius.

11 It is not what he has, nor even what he does, which directly expresses the worth of a man, but what he is.

12 What comfort, what strength, what economy there is in *order*—material order, intellectual order, moral order. To know where one is going and what one wishes—this is order; to keep one's word and one's engagements—again order; to have everything ready under one's hand, to be able to dispose of all one's forces, and to have all one's means of whatever kind under command—still order; to discipline one's habits, one's efforts, one's wishes; to organize one's life, to distribute one's time, to take the measure of one's duties and make one's rights respected; to employ one's capital and resources, one's talents and one's chances profitably;—all this belongs to and is included in the word *order*. Order means light and peace, inward liberty and free command over oneself; order is power. *Æsthetic* and moral beauty consist, the first in a true perception of order, and the second in submission to it, and in the realization of it, by, in, and around oneself. Order is man's greatest need and his true well-being.

13 Beyond the element which is common to all men there is an element which separates them. This element may be religion, country, language, education. But all these being supposed common, there still remains something which serves as a line of demarcation—namely, the ideal. To have an ideal or to have none, to have this ideal or that—this is what digs gulfs between men, even between those who live in the same family circle, under the same roof or in the same room.

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You must love with the same love, think with the same thought as some one else, if you are to escape solitude.

14 Mutual respect implies discretion and reserve even in love itself; it means preserving as much liberty as possible to those whose life we share. We must distrust our instinct of intervention, for the desire to make one's own will prevail is often disguised under the mask of solicitude.

15 Great men are the true men, the men in whom nature has succeeded. They are not extraordinary—they are in the true order. It is the other species of men who are not what they ought to be.

16 At the bottom of the modern man there is always a great thirst for self-forgetfulness, self-distraction; he has a secret horror of all which makes him feel his own littleness; the eternal, the infinite, perfection, therefore, scare and terrify him. He wishes to approve himself, to admire and congratulate himself; and therefore he turns away from all those problems and abysses which might recall to him his own nothingness. This is what makes the real pettiness of so many of our great minds, and accounts for the lack of personal dignity among us—civilized parrots that we are—as compared with the Arab of the desert; or explains the growing frivolity of our masses, more and more educated, no doubt, but also more and more superficial in all their conceptions of happiness.

17 The man who has no refuge in himself, who lives, so to speak, in his front rooms, in the outer whirlwind of things and opinions, is not properly a personality at all; he is not distinct, free, original, a cause—in a word, *some one*.

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He is one of a crowd, a taxpayer, an elector, an anonymity, but not a man. He helps to make up the mass—to fill up the number of human consumers or producers; but he interests nobody but the economist and the statistician, who take the heap of sand as a whole into consideration, without troubling themselves about the uninteresting uniformity of the individual grains. The crowd counts only as a massive elementary force—why? because its constituent parts are individually insignificant: they are all like each other, and we add them up like the molecules of water in a river, gauging them by the fathom instead of appreciating them as individuals. Such men are reckoned and weighed merely as so many bodies: they have never been individualized by conscience, after the manner of souls.

He who floats with the current, who does not guide himself according to higher principles, who has no ideal, no convictions—such a man is a mere article of the world's furniture—a thing moved, instead of a living and moving being—an echo, not a voice. The man who has no inner life is the slave of his surroundings, as the barometer is the obedient servant of the air at rest, and the weathercock the humble servant of the air in motion.

18 The gentleman is the man who is master of himself, who respects himself, and makes others respect him. The essence of gentlemanliness is self-rule, the sovereignty of the soul. It means a character which possesses itself, a force which governs itself, a liberty which affirms and regulates itself, according to the type of true dignity. Such an ideal is closely akin to the Roman type of *dignitas cum auctoritate*.¹ It is more moral than intellectual, and is particularly suited to England, which is pre-eminently the country of will. But from self-respect a thousand other things are derived—such

¹ Dignity with authority.

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as the care of a man's person, of his language, of his manners; watchfulness over his body and over his soul; dominion over his instincts and his passions; the effort to be self-sufficient; the pride which will accept no favor; carefulness not to expose himself to any humiliation or mortification, and to maintain himself independent of any human caprice; the constant protection of his honor and of his self-respect. Such a condition of sovereignty, in so much as it is only easy to the man who is well-born, well-bred, and rich, was naturally long identified with birth, rank, and above all with property. —The idea "gentleman" is, then, derived from feudality; it is, as it were, a milder version of the seigneur.¹

In order to lay himself open to no reproach, a gentleman will keep himself irreproachable; in order to be treated with consideration, he will always be careful himself to observe distances, to apportion respect, and to observe all the gradations of conventional politeness, according to rank, age, and situation.

19 The calm sea says more to the thoughtful soul than the same sea in storm and tumult. But we need the understanding of eternal things and the sentiment of the infinite to be able to feel this. The divine state *par excellence* is that of silence and repose, because all speech and all action are in themselves limited and fugitive. Napoleon with his arms crossed over his breast is more expressive than the furious Hercules beating the air with his athlete's fists. People of passionate temperament never understand this. They are only sensitive to the energy of succession; they know nothing of the energy of condensation. They can only be impressed by acts and effects, by noise and effort. They have no instinct of contemplation, no sense of the pure cause, the fixed source of all movement, the principle of all effects, the center of all

¹ The mediaeval nobleman, lord of a fee or manor.

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light, which does not need to spend itself in order to be sure of its own wealth, nor to throw itself into violent motion to be certain of its own power. The art of passion is sure to please, but it is not the highest art; it is true, indeed, that under the rule of democracy, the serener and calmer forms of art become more and more difficult; the turbulent herd no longer knows the gods.

20 The true critic acts as a fulcrum for all the world. He represents the public judgment, that is to say the public reason, the touchstone, the scales, the refining rod, which tests the value of everyone and the merit of every work. Infallibility of judgment is perhaps rarer than anything else, so fine a balance of qualities does it demand—qualities both natural and acquired, qualities of mind and heart. What years of labor, what study and comparison, are needed to bring the critical judgment to maturity!¹ Like Plato's sage, it is only at fifty that the critic rises to the true height of his literary priesthood, or, to put it less pompously, of his social function. By then only can he hope for insight into all the modes of being, and for mastery of all possible shades of appreciation.

21 The benefactors of humanity are those who have thought great thoughts about her; but her masters and her idols are those who have flattered and despised her, those who have muzzled and massacred her, inflamed her with fanaticism or used her for selfish purposes. Her benefactors are the poets, the artists, the inventors, the apostles, and all pure hearts. Her masters are the Cæsars, the Constantines, the Gregory VII's, the Innocent III's, the Borgias, the Napoleons.

¹ Compare the related remark of Longinus, "Judgment of style is the last and ripest fruit of much experience." (Translated by A. O. Prickard.)

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22 We will have no other master but our caprice—that is to say, our evil self will have no God, and the foundation of our nature is seditious, impious, insolent, refractory, opposed to and contemptuous of all that tries to rule it, and therefore contrary to order, ungovernable and negative. It is this foundation which Christianity calls the natural man. But the savage which is within us, and constitutes the primitive stuff of us, must be disciplined and civilized in order to produce a man. And the man must be patiently cultivated to produce a wise man, and the wise man must be tested and tried if he is to become righteous. And the righteous man must have substituted the will of God for his individual will, if he is to become a saint.

23 Alas, whatever one may say or do, wisdom, justice, reason, and goodness will never be anything more than special cases and the heritage of a few elect souls. Moral and intellectual harmony, excellence in all its forms, will always be a rarity of great price, an isolated *chef d'œuvre*.¹ All that can be expected from the most perfect institutions is that they should make it possible for individual excellence to develop itself, not that they should produce the excellent individual. Virtue and genius, grace and beauty, will always constitute a *noblesse*² such as no form of government can manufacture.

24 Society rests upon conscience and not upon science. Civilization is first and foremost a moral thing. Without honesty, without respect for law, without the worship of duty, without the love of one's neighbor—in a word, without virtue—the whole is menaced and falls into decay, and neither letters nor art, neither luxury nor industry, nor rhetoric, nor

¹ Masterpiece.

² Nobility, aristocracy.

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the policeman, nor the custom-house officer, can maintain erect and whole an edifice of which the foundations are unsound.

25 *Soirée* at the M.'s. About thirty people representing our best society¹ were there, a happy mixture of sexes and ages. There were gray heads, young girls, bright faces—the whole framed in some Aubusson tapestries which made a charming background and gave a soft air of distance to the brilliantly-dressed groups.

In society people are expected to behave as if they lived on ambrosia and concerned themselves with nothing but the loftiest interests. Anxiety, need, passion, have no existence. All realism is suppressed as brutal. In a word, what we call "society" proceeds for the moment on the flattering illusory assumption that it is moving in an ethereal atmosphere and breathing the air of the gods. All vehemence, all natural expression, all real suffering, all careless familiarity, or any frank sign of passion, are startling and distasteful in this delicate *milieu*; they at once destroy the common work, the cloud palace, the magical architectural whole, which has been raised by the general consent and effort. It is like the sharp cock-crow which breaks the spell of all enchantments and puts the fairies to flight. These select gatherings produce, without knowing it, a sort of concert for eyes and ears, an improvised work of art. By the instinctive collaboration of everybody concerned, intellect and taste hold festival, and the associations of reality are exchanged for the associations of imagination. So understood, society is a form of poetry; the cultivated classes deliberately recompose the idyll of the past and the buried world of Astrea.² Paradox or no, I believe that these fugitive attempts to reconstruct a dream whose only end is beauty represent confused reminiscences of

¹ In Geneva, Switzerland.

² The world of the Golden Age.

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an age of gold haunting the human heart, or rather aspirations toward a harmony of things which everyday reality denies to us, and of which art alone gives us a glimpse.

26 I believe that the nations of the present are rather tempting chastisement than learning wisdom. Wisdom, which means balance and harmony, is only met with in individuals. Democracy, which means the rule of the masses, gives preponderance to instinct, to nature, to the passions—that is to say, to blind impulse, to elemental gravitation, to generic fatality. Perpetual vacillation between contraries becomes its only mode of progress, because it represents that childish form of prejudice which falls in love and cools, adores and curses, with the same haste and unreason. A succession of opposing follies gives an impression of change which the people readily identify with improvement, as though Enceladus was more at ease on his left side than on his right, the weight of the volcano remaining the same. The stupidity of Demos is only equaled by its presumption. It is like a youth with all his animal and none of his reasoning powers developed.

Luther's comparison of humanity to a drunken peasant, always ready to fall from his horse on one side or the other, has always struck me as a particularly happy one. It is not that I deny the right of the democracy, but I have no sort of illusion as to the use it will make of its right, so long, at any rate, as wisdom is the exception and conceit the rule. Numbers make law, but goodness has nothing to do with figures. Every fiction is self-expiating, and democracy rests upon this legal fiction, that the majority has not only force but reason on its side—that it possesses not only the right to act but the wisdom necessary for action. The fiction is dangerous because of its flattery; the demagogues have always flattered the private feelings of the masses. The masses will always be below the average. Besides, the age of majority

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will be lowered, the barriers of sex will be swept away, and democracy will finally make itself absurd by handing over the decision of all that is greatest to all that is most incapable. Such an end will be the punishment of its abstract principle of equality, which dispenses the ignorant man from the necessity of self-training, the foolish man from that of self-judgment, and tells the child that there is no need for him to become a man, and the good-for-nothing that self-improvement is of no account. Public law, founded upon virtual equality, will destroy itself by its consequences. It will not recognize the inequalities of worth, of merit, and of experience; in a word, it ignores individual labor, and it will end in the triumph of platitude and the residuum. The *régime* of the Parisian Commune¹ has shown us what kind of material comes to the top in these days of frantic vanity and universal suspicion.

Still, humanity is tough, and survives all catastrophes. Only it makes one impatient to see the race always taking the longest road to an end, and exhausting all possible faults before it is able to accomplish one definite step toward improvement. These innumerable follies, that are to be and must be, have an irritating effect upon me. The more majestic is the history of science, the more intolerable is the history of politics and religion. The mode of progress in the moral world seems an abuse of the patience of God.

27 I have been taking tea at the M.'s. These English homes are very attractive. They are the recompense and the result of a long-lived civilization, and of an ideal untiringly pursued. What ideal? That of a moral order, founded on respect for self and for others, and on reverence for duty—in a word, upon personal worth and dignity. The master shows consideration to his guests, the children are deferential

¹ Maintained for a short time in 1871.

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to their parents, and everyone and everything has its place. They understand both how to command and how to obey. The little world is well governed, and seems to go of itself; duty is the *genius loci*¹—but duty tinged with a reserve and self-control which is the English characteristic. The children are the great test of this domestic system; they are happy, smiling, trustful, and yet no trouble. One feels that they know themselves to be loved, but that they know also that they must obey. *Our* children behave like masters of the house, and when any definite order comes to limit their encroachments they see in it an abuse of power, an arbitrary act. Why? Because it is their principle to believe that everything turns round them. Our children may be gentle and affectionate, but they are not grateful, and they know nothing of self-control.

How do English mothers attain this result? By a rule which is impersonal, invariable, and firm; in other words, by law, which forms man for liberty, while arbitrary decree only leads to rebellion and attempts at emancipation. This method has the immense advantage of forming characters which are restive under arbitrary authority, and yet amenable to justice, conscious of what is due to them and what they owe to others, watchful over conscience, and practiced in self-government. In every English child one feels something of the national motto—"God and my right," and in every English household one has a sense that the home is a citadel, or better still, a ship in which everyone has his place. Naturally in such a world the value set on family life corresponds with the cost of producing it; it is sweet to those whose efforts maintain it.

28 The best path through life is the high road, which initiates us at the right moment into all experience. Ex-

¹ Presiding genius of the place.

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ceptional itineraries are suspicious, and matter for anxiety. What is normal is at once most convenient, most honest, and most wholesome. Crossroads may tempt us for one reason or another, but it is very seldom that we do not come to regret having taken them.

29 Each man begins the world afresh, and not one fault of the first man has been avoided by his remotest descendant. The collective experience of the race accumulates, but individual experience dies with the individual, and the result is that institutions become wiser and knowledge as such increases; but the young man, although more cultivated, is just as presumptuous, and not less fallible to-day than he ever was. So that absolutely there is progress, and relatively there is none. Circumstances improve, but merit remains the same. The whole is better, perhaps, but man is not positively better—he is only different. His defects and his virtues change their form, but the total balance does not show him to be the richer. A thousand things advance, nine hundred and ninety-eight fall back: this is progress. There is nothing in it to be proud of, but something, after all, to console one.

30 Formerly it was the ideas of nature which were a tissue of errors and incoherent fancies; now it is the turn of moral and psychological ideas. The best issue from the present Babel would be the formation or the sketching out of a truly scientific science of man.

31 He who asks of life nothing but the improvement of his own nature, and a continuous moral progress toward inward contentment and religious submission, is less liable than anyone else to miss and waste life.

32 A belief is not true because it is useful.

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33 Which nation is best worth belonging to? There is not one in which the good is not counterbalanced by evil. Each is a caricature of man, a proof that no one among them deserves to crush the others, and that all have something to learn from all. I am alternately struck with the qualities and with the defects of each, which is perhaps lucky for a critic. I am conscious of no preference for the defects of north or south, of west or east; and I should find a difficulty in stating my own predilections. Indeed, I myself am wholly indifferent in the matter, for to me the question is not one of liking or of blaming, but of understanding. My point of view is philosophical—that is to say, impartial and impersonal. The only type which pleases me is perfection—*man*, in short, the ideal man. As for the national man, I bear with and study him, but I have no admiration for him. I can only admire the fine specimens of the race, the great men, the geniuses, the lofty characters and noble souls, and specimens of these are to be found in all the ethnographical divisions. The “country of my choice” (to quote Madame de Staël) is with the chosen souls.

34 The modern haunters of Parnassus¹ carve urns of agate and of onyx, but inside the urns what is there?—ashes. Their work lacks feeling, seriousness, sincerity, and pathos—in a word, soul and moral life. I cannot bring myself to sympathize with such a way of understanding poetry. The talent shown is astonishing, but stuff and matter are wanting. It is an effort of the imagination to stand alone—a substitute for everything else. We find metaphors, rhymes, music, color, but not man, not humanity. Poetry of this factitious kind

¹Amiel's expression is *Les Parnassiens*, an old name revived, which nowadays describes the younger school of French poetry represented by such names as Théophile Gautier, Leconte de Lisle, Théodore de Banville and Baudelaire. [From the translator's note, written in or about the year 1885.]—For relevant matter see below, pp. 405f.; also *Poetry*, p. 559.

may beguile one at twenty, but what can one make of it at fifty? It reminds me of Pergamos, of Alexandria, of all the epochs of decadence when beauty of form hid poverty of thought and exhaustion of feeling. I strongly share the repugnance which this poetical school arouses in simple people. It is as though it only cared to please the world-worn, the over-subtle, the corrupted, while it ignores all normal healthy life, virtuous habits, pure affections, steady labor, honesty, and duty. It is an affectation, and because it is an affectation the school is struck with sterility. The reader desires in the poet something better than a juggler in rhyme, or a conjurer in verse; he looks to find in him a painter of life, a being who thinks, loves, and has a conscience, who feels passion and repentance.

35 How much folly is compatible with ultimate wisdom and prudence? It is difficult to say. The cleverest folk are those who discover soonest how to utilize their neighbor's experience, and so get rid in good time of their natural presumption.

36 These writers¹ press wit, grace, gayety, and charm into the service of goodness; their desire is to show that virtue is not so dull nor common sense so tiresome as people believe. They are persuasive moralists, captivating story-tellers; they rouse the appetite for good. This pretty manner of theirs, however, has its dangers. A moral wrapped up in sugar goes down certainly, but it may be feared that it only goes down because of its sugar. The Sybarites of to-day will tolerate a sermon which is delicate enough to flatter their literary sensuality; but it is their taste which is charmed, not their conscience which is awakened; their principle of conduct escapes untouched.

¹ Stahl and Legouvé.

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Amusement, instruction, morals, are distinct *genres*. They may no doubt be mingled and combined, but if we wish to obtain direct and simple effects, we shall do best to keep them apart. The well-disposed child, besides, does not like mixtures which have something of artifice and deception in them. Duty claims obedience; study requires application; for amusement, nothing is wanted but good temper. To convert obedience and application into means of amusement is to weaken the will and the intelligence. These efforts to make virtue the fashion are praiseworthy enough, but if they do honor to the writers, on the other hand they prove the moral anæmia of society. When the digestion is unspoiled, so much persuading is not necessary to give it a taste for bread.

37 Influence belongs to men of action, and for purposes of action nothing is more useful than narrowness of thought combined with energy of will.

38 Material results are but the tardy sign of invisible activities. The bullet has started long before the noise of the report has reached us. The decisive events of the world take place in the intellect.

27 REFLECTIONS, MAXIMS, CONVERSATIONS¹

Goethe

MAN'S highest virtue always is as much as possible to rule external circumstances, and as little as possible to let himself be ruled by them. Life lies before us, as a huge quarry before the architect: he deserves not the name of architect except, out of this fortuitous mass, he can combine, with the greatest economy, suitableness and durability, some form, the pattern of which originated in his own soul. All things without us—nay, I may add, all things within us—are mere elements; but deep in the inmost shrine of our nature lies the creative force, which out of these can produce what they were meant to be, and which leaves us neither sleep nor rest, till in one way or another, without us or within us, this product has taken shape.

2 When I become acquainted with a man my first inquiry is: With what does he occupy himself, and how, and with what degree of perseverance? The answer regulates the interest which I take in that man for life.

3 Nothing more exposes us to madness than distinguishing ourselves from others, and nothing more contributes to maintain our common sense than living in the common way with multitudes of men.

4 Men are so inclined to content themselves with what is common—the spirit and the senses so easily grow dead to

¹ Selected passages, reprinted—with a few slight alterations—from *The Wisdom of Goethe*, by John Stuart Blackie, and, with the permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, from *Goethe's Literary Essays*, by J. E. Spingarn.

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the impressions of the beautiful and perfect—that every one should study to nourish in his mind the faculty of feeling the best things by every method in his power. For no man can bear to be entirely deprived of such enjoyments; it is only because they are not used to taste of what is excellent, that so many people take delight in silly and insipid things, provided they be new. For this reason one ought every day at least to hear a pleasant song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and, if it be possible, speak a few reasonable words.

5 I read some pieces of Molière's every year, just as, from time to time, I contemplate the engravings after the great Italian masters. For we little men are not able to retain the greatness of such things within ourselves; we must therefore return to them from time to time, and renew our impressions.

6 [Addressed to Eckermann.] Taste is only to be educated by contemplation, not of the tolerably good, but of the truly excellent. I therefore show you only the best works; and when you are grounded in these, you will have a standard for the rest, which you will know how to value, without overrating them.

7 There is nothing by which men display their character so much as in what they consider ridiculous.

8 There is a politeness of the heart; this is closely allied to love. Those who possess this purest fountain of natural politeness find it easy to express the same in forms of outward propriety.

9 To preserve our place and our peace of mind with pleasure in the face of the decided superiority of another,

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our competitor in the same sphere of action, there is only one charm, and that is love.

10 Fools and sensible men are equally innocuous. It is in the half fools and the half wise that the great danger lies.

11 From time to time I meet a young man in whom I can see nothing to object to; only I feel anxious when I observe such a finely equipped fellow ready to swim with the stream; and here I am always forced to make the remark that the rudder is given into the hand of man in his frail skiff, not that he may be at the mercy of the waves, but that he may follow the dictates of a will directed by intelligence.

12 Many men have plenty of cleverness, and plenty of knowledge, but they are at the same time full of vanity; and, in order to obtain from the shallow multitude the reputation of a *bel esprit*,¹ they fling aside all shame and all reverence, and nothing is holy before their reckless wit.

13 The formation of his character is not, as it ought to be, the chief concern with every man. Many wish merely to find a sort of recipe for comfort, directions for acquiring riches, or whatever good they aim at.

14 To act is easy; to think is hard . . .

15 Honest, clear, and unselfish co-operation for the realization of the good and true, that lies between two extremes, is seldom to be met with. What we do meet with is obstinate adherence to an obsolete and soulless tradition on the one hand, and a rash lust for change on the other; retardation without reason and haste without safety.

¹ A man of intellect—an "intellectual."

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16 The battle between the old and the new, the persistent and the progressive, is always the same. All order is apt to stiffen into a lifeless formalism; to get rid of which, order is destroyed, and some time will elapse before people see that order must be recalled. Classicism and romanticism, monopolies of guilds and freedom of crafts, accumulation and division of land—under whatever name, it is always the same conflict, which, after fighting out its result in one direction, in due season creates a new conflict in the opposite direction. The great wisdom of governments would be so to regulate this conflict, that a balance might be established betwixt the two opposites, creating the new without the absolute loss of the old; but this is something that seems to go beyond the strength of men, and God, so far as we may judge, does not seem to wish it.

17 Nothing is more terrible than ignorance with spurs on.

18 At all times it is the individual that preaches the truth, not the age. It was the age that gave Socrates hemlock for his supper; the age that burnt Huss. The age is always the same.

19 Man is entitled to believe in immortality; such belief is agreeable to his nature; and his instincts in this direction are confirmed by religious assurances. My belief in the immortality of the soul springs from the idea of activity; for when I persevere to the end in a course of restless activity, I have a sort of guarantee from Nature that, when the present form of my existence proves itself inadequate for the energizing of my spirit, she will provide another form more appropriate.

20 A tendency to superstition is of the very essence of

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humanity; and, when we think we have completely extinguished it, we shall find it retreating into the strangest nooks and corners, that it may issue out thence on the first occasion it can do so with safety.

21 I am heartily sorry for those persons who are constantly talking of the perishable nature of things, and the nothingness of human life; for, for this very end we are here, to stamp the perishable with an imperishable worth; and this can be done only by taking a just estimate of both.

22 Freedom is an odd thing, and every man has enough of it, if he can only satisfy himself. What avails a superfluity of freedom which we cannot use? Look at this chamber and the next, in which, through the open door, you see my bed. Neither of them is large; and they are rendered still narrower by necessary furniture, books, manuscripts, and works of art; but they are enough for me. I have lived in them all the winter, scarcely entering my front rooms. What have I done with my spacious house, and the liberty of going from one room to another, when I have not found it requisite to make use of them?

If a man has freedom enough to live healthily, and work at his craft, he has enough; and so much all can easily obtain. Then all of us are only free under certain conditions, which we must fulfill. . . . Freedom consists not in refusing to recognize anything above us, but in respecting something which is above us; for, by respecting it, we raise ourselves to it, and by our very acknowledgment make manifest that we bear within ourselves what is higher, and are worthy to be on a level with it.

I have, on my journeys, often met merchants from the north of Germany, who fancied they were my equals, if

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they rudely seated themselves next to me at table. They were, by this method, nothing of the kind; but they would have been so, if they had known how to value and treat me.

23 Nothing is more abhorrent to a reasonable man than an appeal to a majority; for it consists of a few strong men, as leaders, of knaves who temporize, of the feeble who are hangers-on, and of the multitudes who follow without the slightest idea of what they want.

24 All great excellence in life or art, at its first recognition, brings with it a certain pain arising from the strongly felt inferiority of the spectator; only at a later period, when we take it into our own culture, and appropriate as much of it as our capacities allow, we learn to love and to esteem it. Mediocrity, on the other hand, may often give us unqualified pleasure; it does not disturb our self-satisfaction, but rather encourages us with the thought that we are as good as another.

25 You cannot imagine what stuff it [a manuscript collection of poems by a well-known German poet] contains. All the poets write as if they were ill, and the whole world were a lazaretto. They all speak of the woe and the misery of this earth, and of the joys of a hereafter; all are discontented, and one draws the other into a state of still greater discontent. This is a real abuse of poetry, which was given to us to hide the little discords of life, and to make man contented with the world and his condition. But the present generation is afraid of all such strength, and only feels poetical when it has weakness to deal with.

I have hit on a good word to tease these gentlemen. I will call their poetry "Lazaretto-poetry"; and I will give the name of "Tyrtæan-poetry" to that which not only sings war-

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songs,¹ but also arms men with courage to undergo the conflicts of life.

26 Let me not be told that the actual world is destitute of a poetic interest. It is the great triumph of genius to make the common appear novel by opening our eyes to its beauty. Reality gives the motive, the hinging points, the kernel; but to create a beautiful living whole out of these rough materials—that is the work of the poet.

27 Anyone who is sufficiently young, and who is not quite spoiled, could not easily find any place that would suit him so well as a theater. No one asks you any questions; you need not open your mouth unless you choose; on the contrary, you sit quite at your ease like a king, letting everything pass before you, and recreating your mind and senses to your heart's content. There is poetry, there is painting, there are singing and music, there is acting—and what not besides. When all these arts, and the charm of youth and beauty heightened to an important degree, work in concert on the same evening, it is a bouquet with which no other can compare. But even when part is bad and part is good, it is still better than looking out of a window, or playing a game at whist in a close room amid the smoke of cigars.

28 People are always talking about originality; but what do they mean? As soon as we are born, the world begins to work upon us, and this goes on to the end. And after all, what can we call our own except energy, strength, and will? If I could give an account of all that I owe to great predecessors and contemporaries, there would be but a small balance in my favor.

¹ Tyrtaeus, an early Greek poet, was a writer of war songs.

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29 What seduces young people is this. We live in a time in which so much culture is diffused that it has communicated itself, as it were, to the atmosphere which a young man breathes. Poetical and philosophic thoughts live and move within him, he has sucked them in with his very breath, but he thinks they are his own property, and utters them as such. But after he has restored to the time what he has received from it, he remains poor. He is like a fountain which plays for a while with the water with which it is supplied, but which ceases to flow as soon as the liquid treasure is exhausted.

30 The German artists, these thirty years back, are living in the conceit that a happy genius can train itself; and a host of passionate admirers and amateurs, equally destitute of all solid foundation, are at hand to confirm them in this delusion. How often have I not heard the praise of a young artist trumpeted in these terms—*he owes everything to himself?* This I hear for the most part with all patience; but now and then I add sharply—*and his work is accordingly.*

31 I cannot but look upon it as one of the greatest misfortunes of our age, that it allows nothing to ripen quietly; that the next moment, so to speak, devours the preceding; that no time is allowed for digestion; and that we live from hand to mouth, without leisure to bring forth any finished product.

32 Altogether, the style of a writer is a faithful representative of his mind; therefore, if any man wishes to write a clear style, let him first be clear in his thoughts; and, if any would write in a noble style, let him first possess a noble soul, and live a noble life.

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33 Very few of our recent young poets write good *prose*. This is very easily explained. To write prose one must have something to say; but he who has nothing to say can still twirl verses and find rhymes, where one word suggests the other, and at last something comes out, which in fact is nothing, but which looks as if it were something.

34 I look on and hold my tongue about many things, because I would not disturb others in their faith or enjoyment, and am content that they should find pleasure in what is distasteful to me.

35 *Microscopes* and *telescopes*, properly considered, put our human eyes out of their natural, healthy, and profitable point of view.

36 A museum of natural history always seems to me like the tombs of Egyptian kings, in which various sorts of beasts and plants are preserved in mummified rigidity. These oddities may claim a curious attention from a caste of mystical priests; but into the sphere of general education such objects should never enter—not only as being out of place, but as in all likelihood displacing things which have better right to occupy the attention of the young. A teacher who tries to awaken the sympathetic interest of young persons in a single noble deed, or a single really good and heroic poem, does more towards his true growth than one who can tell off before him the names and describe the appearances of thousands of the inferior animals; for the upshot of all that curious study of low organisms is simply what we know already,—that man, and man alone, has in a peculiar and special sense been created in the image of God.

37 Individuals may be allowed to occupy themselves with

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natural objects and living creatures in the way that each may consider agreeable or useful; but always and everywhere the proper study of mankind is man.

38 Music is sacred or profane. Sacred music is that species which is most completely in accordance with the dignity of the art, and has the greatest influence upon life—an influence which is exercised over a much greater range of ages and epochs than to the other arts can belong; of the profane or secular species, cheerfulness should always be the dominant characteristic.

39 He who attacks marriage, he who by word or deed sets himself to undermine this foundation of all moral society, must settle the matter with me; and if I don't bring him to reason, then I have nothing to do with him. Marriage is the beginning and the summit of all civilization. It makes the savage mild; and the most highly cultivated man has no better means of demonstrating his mildness. Marriage must be indissoluble, for it brings so much general happiness that any individual case of unhappiness that may be connected with it cannot come into account.

What do people mean when they talk about unhappiness? It is not so much unhappiness as impatience that from time to time possesses men, and then they choose to call themselves miserable. Let the moment of irritation but pass over, and people will find cause enough to think themselves happy that a state which has already existed so long still exists. For separation there can be no sufficient reason. In our present human condition there is so much of sorrow and joy interwoven, that it is beyond all calculation what obligations a married pair lie under to one another. It is an infinite debt which it requires an eternity to cancel. Disagreeable it may be, I admit, sometimes: that is just as it should be. Are we

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not really married to our conscience, of which we might often be willing to rid ourselves because it often annoys us more than any man or woman can possibly annoy one another?

40 Within the last few days . . . I have read many and various things; especially a Chinese novel, which occupies me still, and seems to me very remarkable. . . . The Chinese think, act, and feel almost exactly like us; and we soon find that we are perfectly like them, excepting that all they do is more clear, more pure and decorous than with us.

41 We must not give this value [of becoming a literary model to us] to the Chinese, or the Servian, or Calderon, or the *Nibelungen*; but if we really want a pattern, we must always return to the ancient Greeks, in whose works the beauty of mankind is constantly represented. All the rest we must look at only historically, appropriating to ourselves what is good, so far as it goes.

42 In this subject [the poetical subject of Philoctetes] the problem was very simple, namely, to bring Philoctetes, with his bow, from the island of Lemnos. But the manner of doing this was the business of the poet, and here each could show the power of his invention, and one could excel another. Ulysses must fetch him; but shall he be recognized by Philoctetes or not? and if not, how shall he be disguised? Shall Ulysses go alone, or shall he have companions, and who shall they be? In *Æschylus* the companion is unknown; in *Euripides*, it is *Diomed*; in *Sophocles*, the son of *Achilles*. Then, in what situation is Philoctetes to be found? Shall the island be inhabited or not? and, if inhabited, shall any sympathetic soul have taken compassion on him or not? And so with a hundred other things, which are all at the discretion of the poet, and in the selection and omission of which

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one may show his superiority in wisdom to another. Here is the grand point, and our present poets should do like the ancients. They should not be always asking whether a subject has been used before, and look to south and north for unheard-of adventures, which are often barbarous enough, and merely make an impression as incidents. But to make something of a simple subject by a masterly treatment requires intellect and great talent, and these we do not find.

43 Indeed, I would advise the choice of subjects which have been worked before. How many *Iphigenias* have been written! yet they are all different, for each writer considers and arranges the subject differently; namely, after his own fashion.

44 It is almost impossible, in the present day, to find a situation which is thoroughly new. It is merely the manner of looking at it, and the art of treating and representing it, which can be new, and one must be the more cautious of every imitation.

45 I call the classic *healthy*, the romantic *sickly*. In this sense, the *Nibelungenlied* is as classic as the *Iliad*, for both are vigorous and healthy. Most modern productions are romantic, not because they are new, but because they are weak, morbid, and sickly; and the antique is classic, not because it is old, but because it is strong, fresh, joyous, and healthy. If we distinguish "classic" and "romantic" by these qualities, it will be easy to see our way clearly.

46 From these old-German gloomy times [that is, from German literature of the Middle Ages] we can obtain as little as from the Servian songs, and similar barbaric popular poetry. We can read it and be interested about it for a

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while, but merely to cast it aside, and let it lie behind us. Generally speaking, a man is quite sufficiently saddened by his own passions and destiny, and need not make himself more so by the darkness of a barbaric past. He needs enlightening and cheering influences, and should therefore turn to those eras in art and literature, during which remarkable men obtained perfect culture, so that they were satisfied with themselves, and able to impart to others the blessings of their culture.

47 He [Victor Hugo] has a fine talent, but quite entangled in the unhappy romantic tendency of his time, by which he is seduced to represent, together with what is beautiful, also that which is most insupportable and hideous. I have lately been reading his *Notre Dame de Paris*, and required no little patience to support the horror with which this reading has inspired me. It is the most abominable book that ever was written! Besides, one is not even indemnified for the torture one has to endure by the pleasure one might receive from a truthful representation of human nature or human character. His book is, on the contrary, utterly destitute of nature and truth! The so-called characters whom he brings forward are not human beings with living flesh and blood, but miserable wooden puppets, which he deals with as he pleases, and which he causes to make all sorts of contortions and grimaces just as he needs them for his desired effects. But what an age it must be which not only renders such a book possible and calls it into existence, but even finds it endurable and delightful.

48 "There are some poets who have a tendency always to occupy themselves with things which another likes to drive from his mind." What say you to this? There we know

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at once where we are, and how we have to classify a great number of our most modern *literati*.

49 Usually, you [women] read a book to find nutrition for the heart, to find a hero whom you could love. This is not the way to read; the great point is, not whether this or that character pleases, but whether the whole book pleases.

50 We read far too many poor things, thus losing time, and gaining nothing.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

THERE are men of *esprit* who are excessively exhausting to some people. They are the talkers who have what may be called *jerky* minds. Their thoughts do not run in the natural order of sequence. They say bright things on all possible subjects, but their zigzags rack you to death. After a jolting half-hour with one of those jerky companions, talking with a dull friend affords great relief. It is like taking the cat in your lap after holding a squirrel.

2 Little-minded people's thoughts move in such small circles that five minutes' conversation gives you an arc long enough to determine their whole curve. An arc in the movement of a large intellect does not sensibly differ from a straight line.

3 If a logical mind ever found out anything with its logic? —I should say that its most frequent work was to build a *pons asinorum* ² over chasms which shrewd people can bestride without such a structure. You can hire logic, in the shape of a lawyer, to prove anything that you want to prove. You can buy treatises to show that Napoleon never lived, and that no battle of Bunker Hill was ever fought. The great minds are those with a wide span, which couple truths related to, but far removed from, each other.

Logicians carry the surveyor's chain over the track of which these are the true explorers. I value a man mainly for his

¹ From *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*. The speaker throughout is the "Autocrat."

² Asses' bridge.

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primary relations with truth, as I understand truth,—not for any secondary artifice in handling his ideas. Some of the sharpest men in argument are notoriously unsound in judgment. I should not trust the counsel of a smart debater, any more than that of a good chess-player. Either may, of course, advise wisely, but not necessarily because he wrangles or plays well.

4 When John and Thomas . . . are talking together, it is natural enough that among the six there should be more or less confusion and misapprehension. . . .

I think, I said, I can make it plain to Benjamin Franklin¹ here that there are at least six personalities distinctly to be recognized as taking part in that dialogue between John and Thomas.

Three Johns	{	1 The real John; known only to his Maker. 2 John's ideal John; never the real one, and often very unlike him. 3 Thomas's ideal John; never the real John, nor John's John, but often very unlike either.
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Three Thomases	{	1 The real Thomas. 2 Thomas's ideal Thomas. 3 John's ideal Thomas.
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Only one of the three Johns is taxed; only one can be weighed on a platform balance; but the other two are just as important in the conversation. Let us suppose the real John to be old, dull, and ill-looking. But as the Higher Powers have not conferred on men the gift of seeing themselves in the true light, John very possibly conceives himself to be youthful, witty, and fascinating, and talks from the

¹ A small boy of the household.

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point of view of this ideal. Thomas, again, believes him to be an artful rogue, we will say; therefore he *is*, so far as Thomas's attitude in the conversation is concerned, an artful rogue, though really simple and stupid. The same conditions apply to the three Thomases. It follows, that until a man can be found who knows himself as his Maker knows him, or who sees himself as others see him, there must be at least six persons engaged in every dialogue between two. Of these, the least important, philosophically speaking, is the one that we have called the real person. No wonder two disputants often get angry, when there are six of them talking and listening all at the same time.

5 All a man's antecedents and possibilities are summed up in a single utterance, which gives at once the gauge of his education and his mental organization.

6 I have an immense respect for a man of talents *plus* "the mathematics." But the calculating power alone should seem to be the least human of qualities, and to have the smallest amount of reason in it; since a machine can be made to do the work of three or four calculators, and better than any one of them. Sometimes I have been troubled that I had not a deeper intuitive apprehension of the relations of numbers. But the triumph of the ciphering hand-organ has consoled me. I always fancy I can hear the wheels clicking in a calculator's brain. The power of dealing with numbers is a kind of "detached lever" arrangement, which may be put into a mighty poor watch. I suppose it is about as common as the power of moving the ears voluntarily, which is a moderately rare endowment.

7 Self-made men?—Well, yes. Of course everybody likes and respects self-made men. It is a great deal better

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to be made in that way than not to be made at all. Are any of you younger people old enough to remember that Irishman's house on the marsh at Cambridgeport, which house he built from drain to chimney-top with his own hands? It took him a great many years to build it, and one could see that it was a little out of plumb, and a little wavy in outline, and a little queer and uncertain in general aspect. A regular hand could certainly have built a better house; but it was a very good house for a "self-made" carpenter's house, and people praised it, and said how remarkably well the Irishman had succeeded. They never thought of praising the fine blocks of houses a little farther on.

Your self-made man, whittled into shape with his own jack-knife, deserves more credit, if that is all, than the regular engine-turned article, shaped by the most approved pattern, and French polished by society and travel. But as to saying that one is every way the equal of the other, that is another matter. The right of strict social discrimination of all things and persons, according to their merits, native or acquired, is one of the most precious republican privileges. I take the liberty to exercise it when I say, that *other things being equal*, in most relations of life I prefer a man of family. . . .

No, my friends, I go (always, other things being equal) for the man who inherits family traditions and the cumulative humanities of at least four or five generations. Above all things, as a child, he should have tumbled about in the library. All men are afraid of books, who have not handled them from infancy. Do you suppose our dear *didascalos*¹ over there ever read *Poli Synopsis*, or consulted *Castelli Lexicon*, while he was growing up to their stature? Not he; but virtue passed through the hem of their parchment and leather garments whenever he touched them, as the precious drugs sweated

¹ Schoolmaster.

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through the bat's handle in the Arabian story. I tell you he is at home wherever he smells the invigorating fragrance of Russia leather. No self-made man feels so. One may, it is true, have all the antecedents I have spoken of, and yet be a poor or a shabby fellow. One may have none of them, and yet be fit for councils and courts. Then let them change places. Our social arrangement has this great beauty, that its strata shift up and down as they change specific gravity, without being clogged by layers of prescription. But I still insist on my democratic liberty of choice, and I go for the man with the gallery of family portraits against the one with the twenty-five-cent daguerreotype, unless I find out that the last is the better of the two.

8 Don't flatter yourselves that friendship authorizes you to say disagreeable things to your intimates. On the contrary, the nearer you come into a relation with a person, the more necessary do tact and courtesy become. Except in cases of necessity, which are rare, leave your friend to learn unpleasant truths from his enemies; they are ready enough to tell them. Good-breeding *never* forgets that *amour-propre*¹ is universal.

9 The opinions of relatives as to a man's powers are very commonly of little value; not merely because they sometimes overrate their own flesh and blood, as some may suppose; on the contrary, they are quite as likely to underrate those whom they have grown into the habit of considering like themselves.

10 I find the great thing in this world is, not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.

11 Now I tell you a poem must be kept *and used*, like a

¹ Self-love.

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meerschäum or a violin. A poem is just as porous as the meerschäum;—the more porous it is the better. I mean to say that a genuine poem is capable of absorbing an indefinite amount of the essence of our own humanity,—its tenderness, its heroism, its regrets, its aspirations,—so as to be gradually stained through with a divine secondary color derived from ourselves. So you see it must take time to bring the sentiment of a poem into harmony with our nature, by staining ourselves through every thought and image our being can penetrate.

Then again as to the mere music of a new poem; why, who can expect anything more from that than from the music of a violin fresh from the maker's hands? Now you know very well that there are no less than fifty-eight different pieces in a violin. These pieces are strangers to each other, and it takes a century, more or less, to make them thoroughly acquainted. At last they learn to vibrate in harmony, and the instrument becomes an organic whole, as if it were a great seed-capsule which had grown from a garden bed in Cremona or elsewhere. Besides, the wood is juicy and full of sap for fifty years or so, but at the end of fifty or a hundred more gets tolerably dry and comparatively resonant.

Don't you see that all this is just as true of a poem? Counting each word as a piece, there are more pieces in an average copy of verses than in a violin. The poet has forced all these words together, and fastened them, and they don't understand it at first. But let the poem be repeated aloud and murmured over in the mind's muffled whisper often enough, and at length the parts become knit together in such absolute solidarity that you could not change a syllable without the whole world's crying out against you for meddling with the harmonious fabric.

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guillotine-ax must have a slanting edge. Something intensely human, narrow, and definite pierces to the seat of our sensibilities more readily than huge occurrences and catastrophes. A nail will pick a lock that defies hatchet and hammer. The *Royal George* went down with all her crew, and Cowper wrote an exquisitely simple poem about it; but the leaf which holds it is smooth, while that which bears the lines on his mother's portrait is blistered with tears.¹

13 Is a young man in the habit of writing verses? Then the presumption is that he is an inferior person. For, look you, there are at least nine chances in ten that he writes *poor* verses. Now the habit of chewing on rhymes without sense and soul to match them is, like that of using any other narcotic, at once a proof of feebleness and a debilitating agent. A young man can get rid of the presumption against him afforded by his writing verses only by convincing us that they are verses worth writing.

¹ The two poems referred to are reprinted in *Poetry*, pp. 12 and 818.

*Confucian Sacred Books*¹

I

SELECTED SAYINGS

THE Master said—

1 He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it.

2 In the *Book of Poetry* are three hundred pieces, but the design of them all may be embraced in one sentence—
“Having no depraved thoughts.”

3 At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning.

At thirty, I stood firm.

At forty, I had no doubts.

At fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven.

At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth.

At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right.

4 A youth, when at home, should be filial, and, abroad, respectful to his elders. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow in love to all, and cultivate the friendship of the good. When he has time and opportunity, after the performance of these things, he should employ them in polite studies.

¹ The translation is that published, together with the original and notes, by the Commercial Press Company of Shanghai. Chinese proper names are here printed without the usual accents.

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5 I have talked with Hui for a whole day, and he has not made any objection to anything I said;—as if he were stupid. He has retired, and I have examined his conduct when away from me, and found him able to illustrate my teachings. Hui!—He is not stupid.

6 See what a man does.

Mark his motives.

Examine in what things he rests.

How can a man conceal his character?

How can a man conceal his character?

7 If a man keeps cherishing his old knowledge, so as continually to be acquiring new, he may be a teacher of others.

8 Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous.

9 Yu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it;—this is knowledge.

10 It is virtuous manners which constitute the excellence of a neighborhood. If a man in selecting a residence do not fix on one where such prevail, how can he be wise?

11 It is only the truly virtuous man who can love, or who can hate, others.

12 If a superior man abandon virtue, how can he fulfill the requirements of that name?

13 Is anyone able for one day to apply his strength to

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virtue? I have not seen the case in which his strength would be insufficient. Should there possibly be any such case, I have not seen it.

14 If a man in the morning hear the right way, he may die in the evening without regret.

15 A scholar whose mind is set on truth, and who is ashamed of bad clothes and bad food, is not fit to be discoursed with.

16 A man should say: I am not concerned that I have no place, I am concerned how I may fit myself for one; I am not concerned that I am not known, I seek to be worthy to be known.

17 When we see men of worth, we should think of equaling them; when we see men of a contrary character, we should turn inwards and examine ourselves.

18 It is all over! I have not yet seen one who could perceive his faults, and inwardly accuse himself.

19 Man is born for uprightness. If a man lose his uprightness, and yet live, his escape from death is the effect of mere good fortune.

20 They who know the truth are not equal to those who love it, and they who love it are not equal to those who delight in it.

21 To those whose talents are above mediocrity, the highest subjects may be announced. To those who are below mediocrity, the highest subjects may not be announced.

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22 Now the man of perfect virtue, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others.

23 I do not open up the truth to one who is not eager to get knowledge, nor help out anyone who is not anxious to explain himself. When I have presented one corner of a subject to anyone, and he cannot from it learn the other three, I do not repeat my lesson.

24 With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and my bended arm for a pillow;—I have still joy in the midst of these things. Riches and honors acquired by unrighteousness are to me as a floating cloud.

25 The superior man is satisfied and composed; the mean man is always full of distress.

26 The people may be made to follow a path of action, but they may not be made to understand it.

27 Though a man have abilities as admirable as those of the duke of Chau, yet if he be proud and niggardly, those other things are really not worth being looked at.

28 Am I indeed possessed of knowledge? I am not knowing. But if a mean person, who appears quite empty-like, ask anything of me, I set it forth from one end to the other, and exhaust it.

29 I have not seen one who loves virtue as he loves beauty.

30 There are cases in which the blade springs, but the plant does not go on to flower! There are cases where it flowers, but no fruit is subsequently produced!

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31 A youth is to be regarded with respect. How do we know that his future will not be equal to our present? If he reach the age of forty or fifty, and has not made himself heard of, then indeed he will not be worth being regarded with respect.

32 The commander of the forces of a large state may be carried off, but the will of even a common man cannot be taken from him.

33 Hui gives me no assistance. There is nothing that I say in which he does not delight. [Compare 6 above.]

34 If a minister make his own conduct correct, what difficulty will he have in assisting in government? If he cannot rectify himself, what has he to do with rectifying others?

35 In preparing the governmental notifications, Pi Shan first made the rough draught; Shi-shu examined and discussed its contents; Tsze-yu, the manager of foreign intercourse, then polished the style; and, finally, Tsze-chan of Tung-li gave it the proper elegance and finish.

36 He who speaks without modesty will find it difficult to make his words good.

37 Yu, those who know virtue are few.

38 May not Shun be instanced as having governed efficiently without exertion? What did he do? He did nothing but gravely and reverently occupy his royal seat.¹

¹ The intention of the sage is to suggest the extraordinary influence which a ruler may exert merely by being himself a good man. Among the sayings here reprinted will be noted others of a similar tenor. Shun—a critic has recently observed—appears from other passages to have been competent also in more customary or more obvious means of government.

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39 If a man take no thought about what is distant, he will find sorrow near at hand.

40 When a man is not in the habit of saying—"What shall I think of this? What shall I think of this?" I can indeed do nothing for him.

41 The superior man dislikes the thought of his name not being mentioned after his death.

42 In my dealings with men, whose evil do I blame, whose goodness do I praise, beyond what is proper? If I do sometimes exceed in praise, there must be ground for it in my examination of the individual.¹

43 To have faults and not to reform them,—this, indeed, should be pronounced having faults.

44 I have been the whole day without eating, and the whole night without sleeping:—occupied with thinking. It was of no use. The better plan is to learn.

45 The superior man is correctly firm, and not firm merely.

46 There are three things of which the superior man stands in awe. He stands in awe of the ordinances of Heaven. He stands in awe of great men. He stands in awe of the words of sages.

The mean man does not know the ordinances of Heaven, and consequently does not stand in awe of them. He is

¹ That is, observes a commentator, "from my examination of him I believe he will yet verify my words."

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disrespectful to great men. He makes sport of the words of sages.

47 There are only the wise of the highest class, and the stupid of the lowest class, who cannot be changed.

48 Hard is it to deal with him who will stuff himself with food the whole day without applying his mind to anything good! Are there not gamesters and chessplayers? To be one of these would still be better than doing nothing at all.

49 Though he [the superior man] may be all unknown, unregarded by the world, he feels no regret.—It is only the sage who is capable of this.

50 The superior man does what is proper to the station in which he is; he does not desire to go beyond this.

In a position of wealth and honor, he does what is proper to a position of wealth and honor. In a poor and low position, he does what is proper to a poor and low position. Situated among barbarous tribes, he does what is proper to a situation among barbarous tribes. In a position of sorrow and difficulty, he does what is proper to a position of sorrow and difficulty. The superior man can find himself in no situation in which he is not himself.

In a high situation, he does not treat with contempt his inferiors. In a low situation, he does not court the favor of his superiors. He rectifies himself, and seeks for nothing from others, so that he has no dissatisfactions. He does not murmur against Heaven, nor grumble against men.

Thus it is that the superior man is quiet and calm, waiting for the appointments of Heaven, while the mean man walks in dangerous paths, looking for lucky occurrences.

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In archery we have something like the way of the superior man. When the archer misses the center of the target, he turns round and seeks for the cause of his failure in himself.

II

CONVERSATIONS, REPORTED SAYINGS, BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

51 The Duke Ai asked, saying, "What should be done in order to secure the submission of the people?" Confucius replied, "Advance the upright and set aside the crooked; then the people will submit. Advance the crooked and set aside the upright; then the people will not submit."

52 The Master said of the Shao that it was perfectly beautiful and also perfectly good. He said of the Wu that it was perfectly beautiful but not perfectly good.¹

53 Some one said, "Yung is truly virtuous, but he is not ready with his tongue."

The Master said, "What is the good of being ready with the tongue? They who encounter men with smartnesses of speech for the most part procure themselves hatred. I know not whether he be truly virtuous, but why should he show readiness of the tongue?"

54 The Master said to Tsze-kung, "Which do you consider superior, yourself or Hui?"

Tsze-kung replied, "How dare I compare myself with Hui? Hui hears one point and knows all about a subject; I hear one point and know a second."

¹ The Shao and the Wu were different kinds of music.

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The Master said, "You are not equal to him. I grant you, you are not equal to him."

55 Tsai Yu being asleep during the daytime, the Master said, "Rotten wood cannot be carved; a wall of dirty earth will not receive the trowel. This Yu!—what is the use of my reproving him?"

The Master said, "At first, my way with men was to hear their words, and give them credit for their conduct. Now my way is to hear their words and look at their conduct. It is from Yu that I have learned to make this change."

56 The Master said, "I have not seen a firm and unbending man." Some one replied, "There is Shan Chang." "Chang," said the Master, "is under the influence of his passions; how can he be pronounced firm and unbending?"

57 Tsze-kung said, "What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men." The Master said, "Tsze, you have not attained to that."

58 Tsze-chang asked, saying, "The minister Tsze-wan thrice took office, and manifested no joy in his countenance. Thrice he retired from office, and manifested no displeasure. He made it a point to inform the new minister of the way in which he had conducted the government;—what do you say of him?" The Master replied, "He was loyal." "Was he perfectly virtuous?" "I do not know. How can he be pronounced perfectly virtuous?"

Tsze-chang proceeded, "When the officer Chui killed the prince of Chi, Chan Wan, though he was the owner of forty horses, abandoned them and left the country. Coming to another state, he said, 'They are here like our great officer Chui,' and left it. He came to a second state, and with the

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same observation left it also;—what do you say of him?" The Master replied, "He was pure." "Was he perfectly virtuous?" "I do not know. How can he be pronounced perfectly virtuous?"¹

59 The subjects on which the Master did not talk, were—extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings.²

60 The Master was mild, and yet dignified; majestic, and yet not fierce; respectful, and yet easy.

61 The Master was wishing to go and live among the nine wild tribes of the east. Some one said, "They are rude. How can you do such a thing?" The Master said, "If a superior man dwelt among them, what rudeness would there be?"

62 Tsze-lu asked whether he should immediately carry into practice what he heard. The Master said, "There are your father and elder brothers to be consulted;—why should you act on that principle of immediately carrying into practice what you hear?" Zan Yu asked the same, whether he should immediately carry into practice what he heard, and the Master answered, "Immediately carry into practice what you hear." Kung-hsi Hwa said, "Yu asked whether he should carry immediately into practice what he heard, and you said, 'There are your father and elder brothers to be consulted.' Chiu asked whether he should immediately carry into practice what he heard, and you said, 'Carry it immediately into practice.' I, Chih, am perplexed, and venture to ask you for an explana-

¹ The moral is, according to a commentator, "The praise of perfect virtue is not to be lightly accorded."

² Compare Buddha, below, pp. 398ff.

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tion." The Master said, "Chiu is retiring and slow; therefore I urged him forward. Yu has more than his own share of energy; therefore I kept him back."

63 Yen Yuan asked about perfect virtue. The Master said, "To subdue one's self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue. If a man can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety, all under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him."

64 Tsze-kung asked about government. The Master said, "The requisites of government are that there be sufficiency of food, sufficiency of military equipment, and the confidence of the people in their ruler."

Tsze-kung said, "If it cannot be helped, and one of these must be dispensed with, which of the three should be foregone first?" "The military equipment," said the Master.

Tsze-kung again asked, "If it cannot be helped, and one of the remaining two must be dispensed with, which of them should be foregone?" The Master answered, "Part with the food. From of old, death has been the lot of all men; but if the people have no faith in their rulers, there is no standing for the state."

65 Chi Kang asked Confucius about government, saying, "What do you say to killing the unprincipled for the good of the principled?" Confucius replied, "Sir, in carrying on your government, why should you use killing at all? Let your evinced desires be for what is good, and the people will be good. The relation between superiors and inferiors is like that between the wind and the grass. The grass must bend when the wind blows across it."

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66 Fan Chih requested to be taught husbandry. The Master said, "I am not so good for that as an old husband-man." He requested also to be taught gardening, and was answered, "I am not so good for that as an old gardener."

67 Tsze-kung asked, saying, "What do you say of a man who is loved by all the people of his neighborhood?" The Master replied, "We may not for that accord our approval of him." "And what do you say of him who is hated by all the people of his neighborhood?" The Master said, "We may not for that conclude that he is bad. It is better than either of these cases that the good in the neighborhood love him, and the bad hate him."

68 Chu Po-yu sent a messenger with friendly inquiries to Confucius.

Confucius sat with him, and questioned him. "What," said he, "is your master engaged in?" The messenger replied, "My master is anxious to make his faults few, but he has not yet succeeded." He then went out, and the Master said, "A messenger indeed! A messenger indeed!"

69 Some one said, "What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?"

The Master said, "With what then will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness."

70 Yuan Zang was squatting on his heels, and so waited the approach of the Master, who said to him, "In youth, not humble as befits a junior; in manhood, doing nothing worthy of being handed down; and living on to old age:—this is to be a pest." With this he hit him on the shank with his staff.

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71 Tsze-chang asked how a man should conduct himself so as to be everywhere appreciated.

The Master said, "Let his words be sincere and truthful, and his actions honorable and careful;—such conduct may be practiced among the rude tribes of the South or the North. If his words be not sincere and truthful, and his actions not honorable and careful, will he, with such conduct, be appreciated, even in his neighborhood?"

"When he is standing, let him see those two things, as it were, fronting him. When he is in a carriage, let him see them attached to the yoke. Then may he subsequently carry them into practice."

Tsze-chang wrote these counsels on the end of his sash.

72 Chan Kang asked Po-yu [the son of Confucius], saying, "Have you heard any lessons from your father different from what we have all heard?"

Po-yu replied, "No. He was standing alone once, when I passed below the hall with hasty steps, and said to me, 'Have you learned the Odes?' On my replying 'Not yet,' he added, 'If you do not learn the Odes, you will not be fit to converse with.' I retired and studied the Odes.

"Another day, he was in the same way standing alone, when I passed by below the hall with hasty steps, and said to me, 'Have you learned the rules of Propriety?' On my replying 'Not yet,' he added, 'If you do not learn the rules of Propriety, your character cannot be established.' I then retired, and learned the rules of Propriety.

"I have heard only these two things from him."

Chan Kang retired, and, quite delighted, said, "I asked one thing, and I have got three things. I have heard about the Odes. I have heard about the rules of Propriety. I have also heard that the superior man maintains a distant reserve towards his son."

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73 Shu-sun Wu-shu having spoken revilingly of Chung-ni [Confucius], Tsze-kung said, "It is of no use doing so. Chung-ni cannot be reviled. The talents and virtue of other men are hillocks and mounds, which may be stepped over. Chung-ni is the sun or moon, which it is not possible to step over. Although a man may wish to cut himself off from the sage, what harm can he do to the sun or moon? He only shows that he does not know his own capacity."

74 Tsze-kung said to Chan Tsze-chin: "Were our Master in the position of the ruler of a state or the chief of a family, we should find verified the description which has been given of a sage's rule:—he would plant the people, and forthwith they would be established; he would lead them on, and forthwith they would follow him; he would make them happy, and forthwith multitudes would resort to his dominions; he would stimulate them, and forthwith they would be harmonious. While he lived, he would be glorious. When he died, he would be bitterly lamented."

F ECHNER'S imagination . . . tries to make our picture of the whole earth's life more concrete. He revels in the thought of its perfections. To carry her precious freight through the hours and seasons what form could be more excellent than hers—being as it is horse, wheels, and wagon all in one. Think of her beauty—a shining ball, sky-blue and sun-lit over one half, the other bathed in starry night, reflecting the heavens from all her waters, myriads of lights and shadows in the folds of her mountains and windings of her valleys, she would be a spectacle of rainbow glory, could one only see her from afar as we see parts of her from her own mountain-tops. Every quality of landscape that has a name would then be visible in her at once—all that is delicate or graceful, all that is quiet, or wild, or romantic, or desolate, or cheerful, or luxuriant, or fresh. That landscape is her face—a peopled landscape, too, for men's eyes would appear in it like diamonds among the dewdrops. Green would be the dominant color, but the blue atmosphere and the clouds would enfold her as a bride is shrouded in her veil—a veil the vapory transparent folds of which the earth, through her ministers the winds, never tires of laying and folding about herself anew.¹—William James, *A Pluralistic Universe*.

2 To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds will separate between him

¹ Reprinted with the permission of Mr. Henry James and of Longmans, Green & Co.

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and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.—Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*.

3 To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing.—Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*.

4 I see the spectacle of morning from the hilltop over against my house, from daybreak to sunrise, with emotions which an angel might share. The long slender bars of cloud float like fishes in the sea of crimson light. From the earth, as a shore, I look out into that silent sea. I seem to partake its rapid transformations; the active enchantment reaches my dust, and I dilate and conspire with the morning wind. How does Nature deify us with a few and cheap elements! Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous. The dawn is my Assyria; the sunset and moonrise my Paphos, and unimaginable realms of faerie; broad noon shall be my England of the senses and the understanding; the night shall be my Germany of mystic philosophy and dreams.—Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*.

5 [Hamlet, to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.] "I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look

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you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!"—William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*.

6 [An unnamed counselor addresses Edwin, King of Northumbria, when there is question of abandoning idols and embracing the new "doctrine"—Christianity.] "Such to me, O King, appears this present life of men on earth, in comparison with the time that is unknown to us, as if thou in the winter shouldst sit at the banqueting with thy chiefs and thanes, and a fire should be kindled and the hall warmed, and it should rain and snow and storm without; and there should come a sparrow and swiftly fly through the house, entering in by the one door and going out by the other: lo, for the time that he is within, the storm of winter toucheth him not, but that is only for a moment, for the twinkling of an eye, and soon from the winter he cometh again to the winter. Even so this life of men endureth but a little; what went before, or what shall come after, we know not. Wherefore if this doctrine bring to us anything surer and more acceptable, worthy it is of this—that we should follow it."¹
—Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of England*.

7 Stilpo having escaped from the burning of his town, where he lost wife, children, and goods, Demetrius Poliorcetes seeing him, in so great a ruin of his country, appear with an undisturbed countenance, asked him if he had received no loss! To which he made answer, No; and that, thank God,

¹ Translated from the Anglo-Saxon version of Bede's *History*.

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nothing was lost of his. This also was the meaning of the philosopher Antisthenes, when he pleasantly said, that "men should furnish themselves with such things as would float, and might with the owner escape the storm"; and certainly a wise man never loses anything if he have himself. When the city of Nola was ruined by the barbarians, Paulinus, who was bishop of that place, having there lost all he had, himself a prisoner, prayed after this manner: "O Lord, defend me from being sensible of this loss; for Thou knowest they have yet touched nothing of that which is mine." The riches that made him rich and the goods that made him good, were still kept entire. This it is to make choice of treasures that can secure themselves from plunder and violence, and to hide them in such a place into which no one can enter and that is not to be betrayed by any but ourselves. Wives, children, and goods must be had, and especially health, by him that can get it; but we are not so to set our hearts upon them that our happiness must have its dependence upon them; we must reserve a backshop, wholly our own and entirely free, wherein to settle our true liberty, our principal solitude and retreat. And in this we must for the most part entertain ourselves with ourselves, and so privately that no exotic knowledge or communication be admitted there; there to laugh and to talk, as if without wife, children, goods, train, or attendance, to the end that when it shall so fall out that we must lose any or all of these, it may be no new thing to be without them. We have a mind pliable in itself, that will be company; that has wherewithal to attack and to defend, to receive and to give: let us not then fear in this solitude to languish under an uncomfortable vacuity:—

"In solitude, be a multitude to thyself" (Tibullus).

Virtue is satisfied with herself, without discipline, without

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words, without effects. . . . Solitude seems to me to wear the best favor in such as have already employed their most active and flourishing age in the world's service, after the example of Thales. We have lived enough for others; let us at least live out the small remnant of life for ourselves; let us now call in our thoughts and intentions to ourselves, and to our own ease and repose. 'Tis no light thing to make a sure retreat; it will be enough for us to do without mixing other enterprises. Since God gives us leisure to order our removal, let us make ready, truss our baggage, take leave betimes of the company, and disentangle ourselves from those violent importunities that engage us elsewhere and separate us from ourselves.¹—Montaigne.

8 This great misfortune—to be incapable of solitude.²—La Bruyère.

9 I have sought repose everywhere, and I have found it only in a little corner with a little book.—St. François de Sales.

10 Who has not seen, and who can see unmoved, under a low roof, the eager, blushing boys discharging as they can their household chores, and hastening into the sitting-room to the study of to-morrow's merciless lesson, yet stealing time to read one chapter more of the novel hardly smuggled into the tolerance of father and mother,—atoning for the same by some passages of Plutarch or Goldsmith; the warm sympathy with which they kindle each other in schoolyard or barn, or woodshed, with scraps of poetry or song, with phrases of the last oration or mimicry of the orator; the youthful criticism, on Sunday, of the sermons; the school declamation, faithfully rehearsed at home, sometimes to the fatigue, some-

¹ From the translation of Cotton as revised by William Carew Hazlitt, edition of 1902.

² Employed by Poe (in the French) as epigraph to his short story *The Man of the Crowd*.

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times to the admiration, of sisters; the first solitary joys of literary vanity, when the translation or the theme has been completed, sitting alone near the top of the house; the cautious comparison of the attractive advertisement of the arrival of Macready, Booth, or Kemble, or of the discourse of a well-known speaker, with the expense of the entertainment; the affectionate delight with which they greet the return of each one after the early separations which school or business requires; the foresight with which, during such absences, they hive the honey which opportunity offers, for the ear and imagination of the others; and the unrestrained glee with which they disburden themselves of their early mental treasures when the holidays bring them again together? What is the hoop that holds them staunch? It is the iron band of poverty, of necessity, of austerity, which, excluding them from the sensual enjoyments which make other boys too early old, has directed their activity into safe and right channels, and made them, despite themselves, reverers of the grand, the beautiful, and the good. Ah, short-sighted students of books, of nature, and of man! too happy could they know their advantages, they pine for freedom from that mild parental yoke; they sigh for fine clothes, for rides, for the theater, and premature freedom and dissipation which others possess. Woe to them if their wishes were crowned! The angels that dwell with them, and are weaving laurels of life for their youthful brows, are Toil and Want and Truth and Mutual Faith.—Ralph Waldo Emerson. (Quoted in *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, by George Edward Woodberry.)

II That an opposition there is, in all matter of what we call *conduct*, between a man's first impulses and what he ultimately finds to be the real law of his being; that a man accomplishes his right function as a man, fulfills his end, hits the mark, in giving effect to the real law of his being; and that

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happiness attends his thus hitting the mark,—all good observers report. No statement of this general experience can be simpler or more faithful than one given us by that great naturalist, Aristotle. "In all wholes made up of parts," says he, "there is a ruler and a ruled; throughout nature this is so; we see it even in things without life, they have their *harmony* or *law*. The living being is composed of soul and body, whereof the one is naturally ruler and the other ruled. Now what is natural we are to learn from what fulfills the law of its nature most, and not from what is depraved. So we ought to take the man who has the best disposition of body and soul; and in him we shall find that this is so; for in people that are grievous both to others and to themselves the body may often appear ruling the soul, because such people are poor creatures and false to nature." . . . And if we go on and take this maxim from Stobæus: "All fine acquirement implies a foregoing *effort* of *self-control*"; or this from Horace: "*Rule* your current self or it will rule *you!* bridle it in and chain it down!" or this from Goethe's autobiography: "Everything cries out to us that we must *renounce*"; or still more this from his *Faust*: "Thou must *go without*, *go without!* that is the everlasting song which every hour, all our life through, hoarsely sings to us!"—then we have testimony not only to the necessity of this natural law of rule and suppression, but also to the strain and labor and suffering which attend it. But when we come a little further and take a sentence like this of Plato: "Of sufferings and pains cometh *help*, for it is not possible by any other way to be ridded of our iniquity"; then we get a higher strain, a strain like St. Peter's: "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin"; and we are brought to see, not only the *necessity* of the law of rule and suppression, not only the *pain* and *suffering* in it, but also the *beneficence*. And this positive sense of beneficence, salutariness, and hope, comes out yet more strongly when Words-

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worth says to Duty: "Nor know we anything so fair as is the smile upon thy face";¹ or when Bishop Wilson says: "They that deny themselves will be sure to find their strength increased, their affections raised, and their inward peace continually augmented"; and most of all, perhaps, when we hear from Goethe: "Die and come to life! for so long as this is not accomplished thou art but a troubled guest upon an earth of gloom!" But this is evidently borrowed from Jesus, and by one whose testimony is of all the more weight, because he certainly would not have become thus a borrower from Jesus, unless the truth had compelled him.

And never certainly was the joy, which in self-renouncement underlies the pain, so brought out as when Jesus boldly called the suppression of our first impulses and current thoughts: *life, real life, eternal life*. So that Jesus not only *saw* this great necessary truth of there being, as Aristotle says, in human nature a part to rule and a part to be ruled; he saw it so *thoroughly*; that he saw through the suffering at its surface to the joy at its center, filled it with promise and hope, and made it infinitely attractive. As Israel,² therefore, is "the people of righteousness," because, though others have perceived the importance of righteousness, Israel, above every one, perceived the *happiness* of it; so self-renouncement, the main factor in conduct or righteousness, is "the secret of Jesus," because, although others have seen that it was necessary, Jesus, above every one, saw that it was *peace, joy, life*.³—Matthew Arnold, *Literature and Dogma*.

12 Every habit and faculty is maintained and increased by the corresponding actions: the habit of walking by walking the habit of running by running. If you would be a good reader, read; if a writer, write. But when you shall no

¹ See the "Ode to Duty," *Poetry*, p. 679.

² The Jewish people.

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I have read for thirty days in succession, but have done something else, you will know the consequence. In the same way, if you shall have lain down ten days, get up and attempt to make a long walk, and you will see how your legs are weakened. Generally, then, if you would make anything a habit, do it; if you would not make it a habit, do not do it, but accustom yourself to do something else in place of it.

So it is with respect to the affections of the soul: when you have been angry, you must know that not only has this evil befallen you, but that you have also increased the habit, and in a manner thrown fuel upon fire.

In this manner certainly, as philosophers say, also diseases of the mind grow up. For when you have once desired money, if reason be applied to lead to a perception of the evil, the desire is stopped, and the ruling faculty of our mind is restored to the original authority. But if you apply no means of cure, it no longer returns to the same state, but being again excited by the corresponding appearance, it is inflamed to desire quicker than before: and when this takes place continually, it is henceforth hardened, and the disease of the mind confirms the love of money. For he who has had a fever, and has been relieved from it, is not in the same state that he was before, unless he has been completely cured. Something of the kind happens also in diseases of the soul. Certain traces and blisters are left in it, and unless a man shall completely efface them, when he is again lashed on the same places, the lash will produce not blisters, but sores. If then you wish not to be of an angry temper, do not feed the habit: throw nothing on it which will increase it: at first keep quiet, and count the days on which you have not been angry. I used to be in a passion every day; now every second day; then every third, then every fourth. But if you have intermitted thirty days, make a sacrifice to God. For the habit at first begins to be weakened, and then

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is completely destroyed. "I have not been vexed to-day, nor the day after, nor yet on any succeeding day during two or three months; but I took care when some exciting things happened." Be assured that you are in a good way.¹—Epictetus.

13 A life without a purpose is a languid, drifting thing.—Every day we ought to renew our purpose, saying to ourselves: This day let us make a sound beginning, for what we have hitherto done is nought.—Our improvement is in proportion to our purpose.—We hardly ever manage to get completely rid even of one fault, and do not set our hearts on daily improvement.—Always place a definite purpose before thee.²—Thomas à Kempis.

14 He [Buddha] has succeeded in compressing the wisdom of the ages into a sentence: "To refrain from all evil, to achieve the good, to purify one's own heart, this is the teaching of the Awakened." The Buddhist commentary is interesting: When you repeat the words, they seem to mean nothing, but when you try to put them into practice, you find they mean everything.³—Irving Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership*.

15 [Buddha speaks.]

"Malunkyaputta, anyone who should say, 'I will not lead the religious life under The Blessed One [that is, Buddha] until The Blessed One shall elucidate to me either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death';—

¹ Translated by George Long.

² Sentences quoted by Matthew Arnold in his essay on Marcus Aurelius.

³ This passage and 29 and 32, below, are reprinted with the consent of Mr. Babbitt, and by permission of, and by special arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

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that person would die, Malunkya-putta, before The Tathagata [that is, Buddha] had ever elucidated this to him.

"It is as if, Malunkya-putta, a man had been wounded by an arrow thickly smeared with poison, and his friends and companions, his relatives and kinsfolk, were to procure for him a physician or surgeon; and the sick man were to say, 'I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the man who wounded me belonged to the warrior caste, or to the Brahman caste, or to the agricultural caste, or to the menial caste.'

"Or again he were to say, 'I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the arrow which wounded me was an ordinary arrow, or a claw-headed arrow, or an iron arrow, or a calf-tooth arrow.' That man would die, Malunkya-putta, without ever having learnt this.

"In exactly the same way, Malunkya-putta, any one who should say, 'I will not lead the religious life under The Blessed One until The Blessed One shall elucidate to me either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, or that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death,'—that person would die, Malunkya-putta, before The Tathagata had ever elucidated this to him.

"The religious life, Malunkya-putta, does not depend on the dogma that the world is eternal; nor does the religious life, Malunkya-putta, depend on the dogma that the world is not eternal. Whether the dogma obtain, Malunkya-putta, that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, there still remain birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair, for the extinction of which in the present life I am prescribing.

"Accordingly, Malunkya-putta, bear always in mind what it is that I have not elucidated, and what it is that I have elucidated. And what, Malunkya-putta, have I not elucidated? I have not elucidated, Malunkya-putta, that the world is eternal;

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I have not elucidated that the world is not eternal; I have not elucidated that the world is finite; I have not elucidated that the world is infinite; I have not elucidated that the soul and the body are identical; I have not elucidated that the soul is one thing and the body another; I have not elucidated that the saint exists after death; I have not elucidated that the saint does not exist after death; I have not elucidated that the saint both exists and does not exist after death; I have not elucidated that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death. And why, Malunkyaputta, have I not elucidated this? Because, Malunkyaputta, this profits not, nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion, nor tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, the supernatural faculties, supreme wisdom, and Nirvana; therefore have I not elucidated it.

“And what, Malunkyaputta, have I elucidated? Misery, Malunkyaputta, have I elucidated; the origin of misery have I elucidated; the cessation of misery have I elucidated; and the path leading to the cessation of misery have I elucidated. And why, Malunkyaputta, have I elucidated this? Because, Malunkyaputta, this does profit, has to do with the fundamentals of religion, and tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, knowledge, supreme wisdom, and Nirvana; therefore have I elucidated it. Accordingly, Malunkyaputta, bear always in mind what it is that I have not elucidated, and what it is that I have elucidated.”

Thus spake The Blessed One; and, delighted, the venerable Malunkyaputta applauded the speech of The Blessed One.¹

16 The wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure: and he that hath little business shall become wise. How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plow, and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in

¹ A passage, in abridged form, from the Buddhist sacred books. The translation is by Henry Clarke Warren, and is reprinted with the permission of the Harvard University Press.

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their labors, and whose talk is of bullocks? He giveth his mind to make furrows; and is diligent to give the kine fodder. So every carpenter and workmaster, that laboreth night and day: and they that cut and grave seals, and are diligent to make great variety, and give themselves to counterfeit imagery, and watch to finish a work: the smith also sitting by the anvil, and considering the iron work, the vapor of the fire wasteth his flesh, and he fighteth with the heat of the furnace: the noise of the hammer and the anvil is ever in his ears, and his eyes look still upon the pattern of the thing that he maketh; he setteth his mind to finish his work, and watcheth to polish it perfectly: so doth the potter sitting at his work, and turning the wheel about with his feet, who is always carefully set at his work, and maketh all his work by number; he fashioneth the clay with his arm, and boweth down his strength before his feet; he applieth himself to lead it over; and he is diligent to make clean the furnace: all these trust to their hands: and every one is wise in his work. Without these cannot a city be inhabited: and they shall not dwell where they will, nor go up and down: they shall not be sought for in public council, nor sit high in the congregation: they shall not sit on the judges' seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment: they cannot declare justice and judgment; and they shall not be found where parables are spoken. But they will maintain the state of the world, and all their desire is in the work of their craft.

But he that giveth his mind to the law of the most High, and is occupied in the meditation thereof, will seek out the wisdom of all the ancient, and be occupied in prophecies. He will keep the sayings of the renowned men: and where subtile parables are, he will be there also. He will seek out the secrets of grave sentences, and be conversant in dark parables. He shall serve among great men, and appear before princes: he will travel through strange countries; for he

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hath tried the good and the evil among men. He will give his heart to resort early to the Lord that made him, and will pray before the most High, and will open his mouth in prayer, and make supplication for his sins. When the great Lord will, he shall be filled with the spirit of understanding: he shall pour out wise sentences, and give thanks unto the Lord in his prayer. He shall direct his counsel and knowledge, and in his secrets shall he meditate. He shall show forth that which he hath learned, and shall glory in the law of the covenant of the Lord. Many shall commend his understanding; and so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out; his memorial shall not depart away, and his name shall live from generation to generation. Nations shall show forth his wisdom, and the congregation shall declare his praise. If he die, he shall leave a greater name than a thousand: and if he live, he shall increase it.—*Ecclesiasticus.*

17 The true philosopher is he who by his unaided reason places himself at the point where the ordinary man arrives only by the help of time.—Rivarol.

18 Sublimity [that is, high excellence in writing] is the note which rings from a great mind. . . . The true orator must have no low ungenerous spirit, for it is not possible that they who think small thoughts, fit for slaves, and practice them in all their daily life, should put out anything to deserve wonder and immortality. Great words issue, and it cannot be otherwise, from those whose thoughts are weighty. So it is on the lips of men of the highest spirit that words of rare greatness are found.¹—Longinus.

¹ This and the three following excerpts are from the translation of A. O. Prickard, and are reprinted through special arrangement with the Oxford University Press.

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19 Many [writers] are borne along inspired by a breath which comes from another; even as the story is that the Pythian prophetess, approaching the tripod, where is a cleft in the ground, inhales, so they say, vapor sent by a god; and then and there, impregnated by the divine power, sings her inspired chants; even so from the great genius of the men of old do streams pass off to the souls of those who emulate them, as though from holy caves; inspired by which, even those not too highly susceptible to the god are possessed by the greatness which was in others.—Longinus.

20 Even we, when we are working out a theme which requires lofty speech and greatness of thought, do well to imagine within ourselves how, if need were, Homer would have said this same thing, how Plato or Demosthenes, or, in history, Thucydides would have made it sublime. The figures of those great men will meet us on the way while we vie with them, they will stand out before our eyes, and lead our souls upwards towards the measure of the ideal which we have conjured up. Still more so if we add to our mental picture this: how would Homer, were he here, have listened to this phrase of mine? or Demosthenes? how would they have felt at this? Truly great is this competition, where we assume for our own words such a jury, such an audience, and pretend that before judges and witnesses of that heroic build we undergo a scrutiny of what we write. Yet more stimulating than all will it be if you add: "If I write this, in what spirit will all future ages hear me?" If any man fear this consequence, that he may say something which shall pass beyond his own day and his own life, then needs must all which such a soul can grasp be barren, blunted, dull; for it posthumous fame can bring no fulfillment.—Longinus.

21 It is a fact of Nature that the soul is raised by true sublimity [that is, by high excellence in writing], it gains

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a proud step upwards, it is filled with joy and exultation, although itself had produced what it hears. Whenever, therefore, anything is heard frequently by a man of sense and literary experience, but does not dispose his mind to high thoughts, nor leave in it material for fresh reflection, beyond what is actually said; while it sinks, if you look carefully at the whole context, and dwindles away, this can never be true sublimity, being preserved so long only as it is heard. That is really great, which gives much food for fresh reflection; which it is hard, nay impossible, to resist; of which the memory is strong and indelible. You may take it that those are beautiful and genuine effects of sublimity which please always, and please all. For when men of different habits, lives, ambitions, ages, all take one and the same view about the same writings, the verdict and pronouncement of such dissimilar individuals give a powerful assurance, beyond all gainsayings, in favor of that which they admire.—Longinus.

22 In fact nothing but the approbation of posterity can establish the true merit of literary works. Whatever brilliant success a writer may have had during his life, whatever praise he may have received, we cannot from these things conclude infallibly that his productions are excellent. False decoration, novelty of style, a fashionable turn of mind, may have brought them into favor; and it will happen perhaps that in the succeeding century people will open their eyes and condemn what they were once pleased to admire. . . .

But when writers have been admired during a great many centuries and have been decried only by a few persons of bizarre taste (depraved tastes we have always with us), then not only is there temerity, there is folly, in venturing to doubt of their merit. Suppose you cannot in the least see the beauties of their writings; you must not therefore con-

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clude that there are no beauties to see, but rather that you are blind, and that you have no taste. The mass of men, in the long run, do not deceive themselves regarding literary works. The time has come when the question is no longer as to whether Homer, Plato, Cicero, Virgil, are extraordinary men; that is a proposition beyond dispute, since twenty centuries are agreed upon it; the question now is to discover in what consists their extraordinary character, which has caused them to be admired through so many centuries; and this you must find out a way to perceive, or else renounce the higher literature, for which, you ought to think, you have neither taste nor genius, since you do not feel what all the world has felt.—Boileau.

23 There is in art a point of perfection, as there is a point of excellence or of maturity in nature. He who feels it and loves it has perfect taste; he who does not feel it, and who cares rather for what falls short of it or goes beyond it, has defective taste. There is then a good and a bad taste, and disputes about tastes are founded in reason.—La Bruyère.

24 It is important, therefore, to hold fast to this: that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life,—to the question: How to live. Morals are often created in a narrow and false fashion; they are bound up with systems of thought and belief which have had their day; they are fallen into the hands of pedants and professional dealers; they grow tiresome to some of us. We find attraction, at times, even in a poetry of revolt against them; in a poetry which might take for its motto Omar Khayyám's words: "Let us make up in the tavern for the time which we have wasted in the mosque." Or we find attractions in a poetry indifferent to them; in a poetry where the contents may be

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what they will, but where the form is studied and exquisite. We delude ourselves in either case; and the best cure for our delusion is to let our minds rest upon that great and inexhaustible word *life*, until we learn to enter into its meaning. A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against *life*; a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards *life*.

Epictetus had a happy figure for things like the play of the senses, or literary form and finish, or argumentative ingenuity, in comparison with "the best and master thing" for us, as he called it, the concern, how to live. Some people were afraid of them, he said, or they disliked and undervalued them. Such people were wrong; they were unthankful or cowardly. But the things might also be over-prized, and treated as final when they are not. They bear to life the relation which inns bear to home. "As if a man, journeying home, and finding a nice inn on the road, and liking it, were to stay forever at the inn! Man, thou hast forgotten thine object; thy journey was not *to* this, but *through* this. 'But this inn is taking.' And how many other inns, too, are taking, and how many fields and meadows! but as places of passage merely. You have an object, which is this: to get home, to do your duty to your family, friends, and fellow-countrymen, to attain inward freedom, serenity, happiness, contentment. Style takes your fancy, arguing takes your fancy, and you forget your home and want to make your abode with them and to stay with them, on the plea that they are taking. Who denies that they are taking? but as places of passage, as inns. And when I say this, you suppose me to be attacking the care for style, the care for argument. I am not; I attack the resting in them, the not looking to the end which is beyond them."¹—Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*.

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25 It is a dangerous mistake, sanctioned, like so many other dangerous mistakes, by Voltaire, to suppose that the best works of imagination are those which draw most tears. One could name this or that melodrama, which no one would like to own having written, and which yet harrows the feelings far more than the *Æneid*. The true tears are those which are called forth by the *beauty* of poetry; there must be as much admiration in them as sorrow. They are the tears which come to our eyes when Priam says to Achilles . . . , "And I have endured,—the like whereof no soul upon the earth hath yet endured,—to carry to my lips the hand of him who slew my child;" or when Joseph cries out: "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt."¹—Chateaubriand.

26 The human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavor to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident,

¹ Quoted by Matthew Arnold in his essay on Joubert. The passages specifically referred to by Chateaubriand may be seen in their context as follows: Joseph's speech, below, p. 765; Priam's speech, in *Poetry*, p. 258. A pathetic incident from the *Æneid* appears in *Poetry* p. 276.

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which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. —William Wordsworth, *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads*.

27 The newspaper is the second hand in the clock of history; and it is not only made of baser metal than those which point to the minute and the hour, but it seldom goes right.

Exaggeration of every kind is as essential to journalism as it is to the dramatic art; for the object of journalism is to make events go as far as possible. Thus it is that all journalists are, in the very nature of their calling, alarmists; and this is their way of giving interest to what they write. Herein they are like little dogs; if anything stirs, they immediately set up a shrill bark.—Schopenhauer.

28 Newspapers always excite curiosity. No one ever lays one down without a feeling of disappointment.—Charles Lamb.

29 It was said of the inhabitants of a certain ancient Greek city that, though they were not fools, they did just the things that fools would do. It is hard to take a glance at one of our news-stands without reflecting that, though we may not be fools, we are reading just the things that fools would read. Our daily press in particular is given over to the most childish sensationalism. "The Americans are an excellent people," Matthew Arnold wrote from Boston in 1883, "but their press seems to me an awful symptom." This symptom was not so awful then as now; for that was before the day of the scarehead and the comic supplement. The American reading his Sunday paper in a state of lazy collapse is perhaps the most perfect symbol of the triumph of quantity over quality that the world has yet seen. Whole forests are being

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ground into pulp daily to minister to our triviality.—Irving Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership*.

30 Give to any man all the time that he now wastes, not only on his vices (when he has them), but on useless business, wearisome or deteriorating amusements, trivial letter-writing, random reading, and he will have plenty of time for culture. "*Die Zeit ist unendlich lang*," says Goethe;¹ and so it really is. Some of us waste all of it, most of us waste much, but all of us waste some.—Matthew Arnold, *Literature and Dogma*.

31 The difficulty for a democracy is, how to find and keep high ideals. The individuals who compose it are, the bulk of them, persons who need to follow an ideal, not to set one; and one ideal of greatness, high feeling and fine culture, which an aristocracy once supplied to them, they lose by the very fact of ceasing to be a lower order and becoming a democracy.—Matthew Arnold, *The Popular Education of France*.

32 Without competition it is impossible that the ends of true justice should be fulfilled—namely, that every man should receive according to his works. The principle of competition is, as Hesiod pointed out long ago, built into the very roots of the world; there is something in the nature of things that calls for a real victory and a real defeat.—Irving Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership*.

33 [Sayings of Poor Richard.] A word to the wise is enough.—Many words won't fill a bushel.—God helps them that help themselves.—But dost thou love life? then do not squander time, for that's the stuff life is made of.—Lost time

¹ Time is endlessly long.

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is never found again.—Drive thy business! let not that drive thee!—One to-day is worth two to-morrows.—(Leisure is time for doing something useful; this leisure the diligent man will obtain, but the lazy man never; so that, as Poor Richard says:) A life of leisure and a life of laziness are two things.—Fly pleasures, and they'll follow you.—Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee.—If you would have your business done, go; if not, send.—Want of care does us more damage than want of knowledge.—In the affairs of this world men are saved, not by faith, but by the want of it.—If you would have a faithful servant, and one that you like, serve yourself.—The Indies have not made Spain rich, because her outgoes are greater than her incomes.—Buy what thou hast no need of, and ere long thou shalt sell thy necessities.—Wise men learn by others' harms; fools, scarcely by their own.—Silks and satins, scarlets and velvets, put out the kitchen fire.—A plowman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees.—A child and a fool imagine twenty shillings and twenty years can never be spent.—He that goes a-borrowing, goes a-sorrowing.—The second vice is lying, the first is running into debt.—Lying rides upon debt's back.—'Tis hard for an empty bag to stand upright!—Creditors have better memories than debtors.—Creditors are a superstitious set, great observers of set days and times.—Those have a short Lent who owe money to be paid at Easter.—Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other, and scarce in that.—We may give advice, but we cannot give conduct.—Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanac*.

34 Seeing every nation affords not experience and tradition enough for all kinds of learning, therefore we are chiefly taught the languages of those people who have at any time been most industrious after wisdom; so that language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known. And

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though a linguist should pride himself to have all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into, yet if he have not studied the solid things in them, as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned man as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only.—John Milton, *On Education*.

35 Disciples do owe unto masters only a temporary belief, and a suspension of their judgment till they be fully instructed, and not an absolute resignation or perpetual captivity.—Francis Bacon.

36 But a university training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life. It is the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility. It shows him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them, how to come to an understanding with them, how to bear with them. He is at home in any society, he has common ground with every class; he knows when to speak and when to be silent; he is able to converse, he is able to listen; he can ask a question pertinently, and gain a lesson

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seasonably, when he has nothing to impart himself; he is ever ready, yet never in the way; he is a pleasant companion, and a comrade you can depend upon; he knows when to be serious and when to trifle, and he has a sure tact which enables him to trifle with gracefulness and to be serious with effect. He has the repose of a mind which lives in itself, while it lives in the world, and which has resources for its happiness at home when it cannot go abroad. He has a gift which serves him in public, and supports him in retirement, without which good fortune is but vulgar, and with which failure and disappointment have a charm. The art which tends to make a man all this, is in the object which it pursues as useful as the art of wealth or the art of health, though it is less susceptible of method, and less tangible, less certain, less complete in its result.—John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*.

III

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For, as I take it, Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here.

—THOMAS CARLYLE

31 THE FUNERAL ORATION OF PERICLES¹

Thucydides

IN the course of the same winter ² the Athenians, following the custom of their fathers, celebrated at the public expense the funeral rites of the first who had fallen in this war. The ceremony is as follows. The bones of the departed lie in state for the space of three days in a tent erected for that purpose, and each one brings to his own dead any offering he desires. On the day of the funeral coffins of cypress wood are borne on wagons, one for each tribe, and the bones of each are in the coffin of his tribe. One empty bier, covered with a pall, is carried in the procession for the missing whose bodies could not be found for burial. Anyone who wishes, whether citizen or stranger, may take part in the funeral procession, and the women who are related to the deceased are present at the burial and make lamentation. The coffins are laid in the public sepulcher, which is situated in the most beautiful suburb of the city; there they always bury those fallen in war, except indeed those who fell at Marathon; for their valor the Athenians judged them to be pre-eminent and they buried them on the spot where they fell. But when the remains have been laid away in the earth, a man chosen by the state, who is regarded as best endowed with wisdom and is fore-

¹ From the translation of Thucydides by Charles Forster Smith, published in the Loeb Classical Library. Reprinted with the permission of Mr. Smith and of Mr. Loeb.—Of the speeches contained in his history Thucydides says: They "are given in the language in which, as it seemed to me, the several speakers would express, on the subjects under consideration, the sentiments most befitting the occasion, though at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said."—The *Funeral Oration* is interestingly quoted by Matthew Arnold, above, p. 37.

² Of 431-430 B. C., the first winter of the Peloponnesian War, the long conflict between Athens and Sparta.

most in public esteem, delivers over them an appropriate eulogy. After this the people depart. In this manner they bury; and throughout the war, whenever occasion arose, they observed this custom. Now over these, the first victims of the war, Pericles, son of Xanthippus, was chosen to speak. And when the proper time came, he advanced from the sepulcher and took his stand upon a platform which had been built high in order that his voice might reach as far as possible in the throng, and spoke as follows:

"Most of those who have spoken here in the past have commended the lawgiver who added this oration to our ceremony, feeling that it is meet and right that it should be spoken at their burial over those who have fallen in war. To me, however, it would have seemed sufficient, when men have proved themselves brave by valiant acts, by act only to make manifest the honors we render them—such honors as to-day you have witnessed in connection with these funeral ceremonies solemnized by the state—and not that the valor of many men should be hazarded on one man to be believed or not according as he spoke well or ill. For it is a hard matter to speak in just measure on an occasion where it is with difficulty that belief in the speaker's accuracy is established. For the hearer who is cognizant of the facts and partial to the dead will perhaps think that scant justice has been done in comparison with his own wishes and his own knowledge, while he who is not so informed, whenever he hears of an exploit which goes beyond his own capacity, will be led by envy to think there is some exaggeration. And indeed eulogies of other men are tolerable only in so far as each hearer thinks that he too has the ability to perform any of the exploits of which he hears; but whatever goes beyond that at once excites envy and unbelief. However, since our forefathers approved of this practice as right and proper, I also, rendering obedience

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to the law, must endeavor to the best of my ability to satisfy the wishes and beliefs of each of you.

"I shall speak first of our ancestors, for it is right and at the same time fitting, on an occasion like this, to give them this place of honor in recalling what they did. For this land of ours, in which the same people have never ceased to dwell in an unbroken line of successive generations, they by their valor transmitted to our times a free state. And not only are they worthy of our praise, but our fathers still more; for they, adding to the inheritance which they received, acquired the empire we now possess and bequeathed it, not without toil, to us who are alive to-day. And we ourselves here assembled, who are now for the most part still in the prime of life, have further strengthened the empire in most respects, and have provided our city with all resources, so that it is sufficient for itself both in peace and in war. The military exploits whereby our several possessions were acquired, whether in any case it were we ourselves or our fathers that valiantly repelled the onset of war, Barbarian or Hellenic, I will not recall, for I have no desire to speak at length among those who know. But I shall first set forth by what sort of training we have come to our present position, and with what political institutions and as the result of what manner of life our empire became great, and afterwards proceed to the praise of these men; for I think that on the present occasion such a recital will be not inappropriate and that the whole throng, both of citizens and of strangers, may with advantage listen to it.

"We live under a form of government which does not imitate the institutions of our neighbors;¹ on the contrary, we are ourselves a model which some follow, rather than imitators of other peoples. It is true that our government is called a democracy, because its administration is in the

¹ Alluding to the Spartans, whose institutions were said to have been borrowed from Crete; in fact, throughout the whole speech the contrast is with Spartan conditions. [Translator's note.]

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hands, not of the few, but of the many; yet while as regards the law all men are on an equality for the settlement of their private disputes, as regards the value set on them it is as each man is in any way distinguished that he is preferred to public honors, not because he belongs to a particular class, but because of personal merits; nor, again, on the ground of poverty is a man barred from a public career by obscurity of rank if he but has it in him to do the state a service. And not only in our public life are we liberal, but also as regards our freedom from suspicion of one another in the pursuits of everyday life; for we do not feel resentment at our neighbor if he does as he likes, nor yet do we put on sour looks which, though harmless, are painful to behold. But while we thus avoid giving offense in our private intercourse, in our public life we are restrained from lawlessness chiefly through reverent fear, for we render obedience to those in authority and to the laws, and especially to those laws which are ordained for the succor of the oppressed and those which, though unwritten, bring upon the transgressor a disgrace which all men recognize.

“Moreover, we have provided for the spirit many relaxations from toil: we have games ¹ and sacrifices regularly throughout the year and homes fitted out with good taste and elegance; and the delight we each day find in these things drives away sadness. And our city is so great that all the products of all the earth flow in upon us, and ours is the happy lot to gather in the good fruits of our own soil with no more home-felt security of enjoyment than we do those of other lands.

“We are also superior to our opponents in our system of training for warfare, and this in the following respects. In the first place, we throw our city open to all the world and we never by exclusion acts debar anyone from learning or

¹ Referring especially to the contests at the chief festivals, like the Panathenæa and Dionysia, which by their artistic setting and performance were recreations of mind and spirit quite as much as physical exercises. [Translator's note.]

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seeing anything which an enemy might profit by observing if it were not kept from his sight; for we place our dependence, not so much upon the prearranged devices to deceive, as upon the courage which springs from our own souls when we are called to action. And again, in the matter of education, whereas they from early childhood by a laborious discipline make pursuit of manly courage, we with our unrestricted mode of life are none the less ready to meet any equality of hazard. And here is the proof: When the Lacedæmonians invade our territory they do not come alone but bring all their confederates with them, whereas we, going by ourselves against our neighbors' territory, generally have no difficulty, though fighting on foreign soil against men who are defending their own homes, in overcoming them in battle. And in fact our united forces no enemy has ever yet met, not only because we are constantly attending to the needs of our navy, but also because on land we send our troops on many enterprises; but if they by chance engage with a division of our forces and defeat a few of us, they boast that they have repulsed us all, and if the victory is ours, they claim that they have been beaten by us all. If, then, by taking our ease rather than by laborious training and depending on a courage which springs more from manner of life than compulsion of laws, we are ready to meet dangers, the gain is all ours, in that we do not borrow trouble by anticipating miseries which are not yet at hand, and when we come to the test we show ourselves fully as brave as those who are always toiling; and so our city is worthy of admiration in these respects, as well as in others.

“For we are lovers of beauty yet with no extravagance and lovers of wisdom yet without weakness. Wealth we employ rather as an opportunity for action than as a subject for boasting; and with us it is not a shame for a man to acknowledge poverty, but the greater shame is for him not to do his

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best to avoid it. And you will find united in the same persons an interest at once in private and in public affairs, and in others of us who give attention chiefly to business, you will find no lack of insight into political matters. For we alone regard the man who takes no part in public affairs, not as one who minds his own business, but as good for nothing; and we Athenians decide public questions for ourselves¹ or at least endeavor to arrive at a sound understanding of them, in the belief that it is not debate that is a hindrance to action, but rather not to be instructed by debate before the time comes for action. For in truth we have this point also of superiority over other men, to be most daring in action and yet at the same time most given to reflection upon the ventures we mean to undertake; with other men, on the contrary, boldness means ignorance and reflection brings hesitation. And they would rightly be adjudged most courageous who, realizing most clearly the pains no less than the pleasures involved, do not on that account turn away from danger. Again, in nobility of spirit, we stand in sharp contrast to most men; for it is not by receiving kindness, but by conferring it, that we acquire our friends. Now he who confers the favor is a firmer friend, in that he is disposed, by continued good-will towards the recipient, to keep the feeling of obligation alive in him; but he who owes it is more listless in his friendship, knowing that when he repays the kindness it will count, not as a favor bestowed, but as a debt repaid. And, finally, we alone confer our benefits without fear of consequences, not upon a calculation of the advantage we shall gain, but with confidence in the spirit of liberality which actuates us.

“In a word, then, I say that our city as a whole is the school of Hellas, and that, as it seems to me, each individual amongst us could in his own person, with the utmost grace

¹ As contrasted with the Spartans, whose officials made the most important decisions. [Translator's note.]

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and versatility, prove himself self-sufficient in the most varied forms of activity. And that this is no mere boast inspired by the occasion, but actual truth, is attested by the very power of our city, a power which we have acquired in consequence of these qualities. For Athens alone among her contemporaries, when put to the test, is superior to the report of her, and she alone neither affords to the enemy who comes against her cause for irritation at the character of the foe by whom he is defeated, nor to her subject cause for complaint that his masters are unworthy. Many are the proofs which we have given of our power and assuredly it does not lack witnesses, and therefore we shall be the wonder not only of the men of to-day but of after times; we shall need no Homer to sing our praise nor any other poet whose verses may perhaps delight for the moment but whose presentation of the facts will be discredited by the truth. Nay, we have compelled every sea and every land to grant access to our daring, and have everywhere planted¹ everlasting memorials both of evil to foes and of good to friends. Such, then, is the city for which these men nobly fought and died, deeming it their duty not to let her be taken from them; and it is fitting that every man who is left behind should suffer willingly for her sake.

“It is for this reason that I have dwelt upon the greatness of our city; for I have desired to show you that we are contending for a higher prize than those who do not enjoy such privileges in like degree, and at the same time to let the praise of these men in whose honor I am now speaking be made manifest by proofs. Indeed, the greatest part of their praise has already been spoken; for when I lauded the city, that was but the praise wherewith the brave deeds of these men and men like them have already adorned her; and there are not many Hellenes whose fame would be found, like theirs, evenly

¹ The reference is to Athenian colonies and cleruchies, which, according to the bearing of the natives, had been attended with ill consequences for these or good. [From the translator's note.]

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balanced with their deeds. And it seems to me that such a death as these men died gives proof enough of man's courage, whether as first revealing it or as affording its final condemnation. Ay, even in the case of those who in other ways fell short of goodness, it is but right that the valor with which they fought for their country should be set before all else; for they have blotted out evil with good and have bestowed a greater benefit by their service to the state than they have done harm by their private lives. And no one of these men either so set his heart upon the continued enjoyment of wealth as to become a coward, or put off the dreadful day, yielding to the hope which poverty inspires, that if he could but escape it he might yet become rich; but, deeming the punishment of the foe to be more desirable than these things, and at the same time regarding such a hazard as the most glorious of all, they chose, accepting the hazard, to be avenged upon the enemy and to relinquish these other things, trusting to hope the still obscure possibilities of success, but in action, as to the issue that was before their eyes, confidently relying upon themselves. And then when the moment of combat came, thinking it better to defend themselves and suffer death rather than to yield and save their lives, they fled, indeed, from the shameful word of dishonor, but with life and limb stood stoutly to their task, and in the brief instant undrained by fire, at the crowning moment not of fear but of glory, they passed away.

"And so these men then bore themselves after a manner that befits our city; but you who survive, though you may pray that it be with less hazard, should resolve that you will have a spirit to meet the foe which is no whit less courageous; and you must estimate the advantage of such a spirit not alone by a speaker's words, for he could make a long story in telling you—what you yourselves know as well as he—all the advantages that are to be gained by winding off the foe. Nay

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rather you must daily fix your gaze upon the power of Athens and become lovers of her, and when the vision of her greatness has inspired you, reflect that all this has been acquired by men of courage who knew their duty and in the hour of conflict were moved by a high sense of honor, who, if ever they failed in any enterprise, were resolved that at least their country should not find herself deserted by their valor, but freely sacrificed to her the fairest offering it was in their power to give. For they gave their lives for the common weal, and in so doing won for themselves the praise which grows not old and the most distinguished of all sepulchers—not that in which they lie buried, but that in which their glory survives in everlasting remembrance, celebrated on every occasion which gives rise to word of eulogy or deed of emulation. For the whole world is the sepulcher of famous men, and it is not the epitaph upon monuments set up in their own land that alone commemorates them, but also in lands not their own there abides in each breast an unwritten memorial of them, planted in the heart rather than graven on stone. Do you, therefore, now make these men your examples, and judging freedom to be happiness and courage to be freedom, be not too anxious about the dangers of war. For it is not those that are in evil plight who have the best excuse for being unsparing of their lives, for they have no hope of better days, but rather those who run the risk, if they continue to live, of the opposite reversal of fortune, and those to whom it makes the greatest difference if they suffer a disaster. For to a manly spirit more bitter is humiliation associated with cowardice than death when it comes unperceived in close company with stalwart deeds and public hopes.

“Wherefore, I do not commiserate the parents of these men, as many of you as are present here, but will rather try to comfort them. For they know that their lives have been passed amid manifold vicissitudes; and it is to be accounted

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good fortune when men win, even as these now, a most glorious death—and you a like grief—and when life has been meted out to them to be happy in no less than to die in. It will be difficult, I know, to persuade you of the truth of this, when you will constantly be reminded of your loss by seeing others in the enjoyment of blessings in which you too once took delight; and grief, I know, is felt, not for the want of the good things which a man has never known, but for what is taken away from him after he has once become accustomed to it. But those of you who are still of an age to have offspring should bear up in the hope of other children; for not only to many of you individually will the children that are born hereafter be a cause of forgetfulness of those who are gone, but the state also will reap a double advantage—it will not be left desolate and it will be secure. For they cannot possibly offer fair and impartial counsel who, having no children to hazard, do not have an equal part in the risk. But as for you who have passed your prime, count as gain the greater portion of your life during which you were fortunate and remember that the remainder will be short; and be comforted by the fair fame of these your sons. For the love of honor alone is untouched by age, and when one comes to the ineffectual period of life it is not ‘gain’ as some say, that gives the greater satisfaction, but honor.

“But for such of you here present as are sons and brothers of these men, I see the greatness of the conflict that awaits you—for the dead are always praised—and even were you to attain to surpassing virtue, hardly would you be judged, I will not say their equals, but even a little inferior. For there is envy of the living on account of rivalry, but that which has been removed from our path is honored with a good-will that knows no antagonism.

“If I am to speak also of womanly virtues, referring to those of you who will henceforth be in widowhood, I will sum up

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All in a brief admonition: Great is your glory if you fall not below the standard which nature has set for your sex, and great also is hers of whom there is least talk among men whether in praise or in blame.

"I have now spoken, in obedience to the law, such words as I had that were fitting, and those whom we are burying have already in part also received their tribute in our deeds;¹ besides, the state will henceforth maintain their children at the public expense until they grow to manhood, thus offering both to the dead and to their survivors a crown of substantial worth as their prize in such contests. For where the prizes offered for virtue are greatest there are found the best citizens. And now, when you have made due lament, each for his own dead, depart."

¹ That is, the honors shown them throughout the rest of the ceremony, ascribed in the first paragraph, above, as contrasted with the words of the eulogist. [Translator's note, adapted.]

Abraham Lincoln

FOURSCORE and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

¹ This speech and the next are inscribed on the walls of the Lincoln Memorial at Washington.

Abraham Lincoln

FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN:

At this second appearance to take the oath of the Presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this, four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it; all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to *saving* the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to *destroy* it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would *make* war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would *accept* war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow,

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the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the *cause* of the conflict might cease with or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces: but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

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With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

Marcus Aurelius

FROM my grandfather Verus I learned good morals and the government of my temper.²

From the reputation and remembrance of my father, modesty and a manly character.

From my mother, piety and beneficence, and abstinence not only from evil deeds, but even from evil thoughts; and further, simplicity in my way of living, far removed from the habits of the rich.

From my great-grandfather, not to have frequented public schools, and to have had good teachers at home, and to know that on such things a man should spend liberally.

From my governor, to be neither of the green nor of the blue party at the games in the Circus, nor a partisan either of the *Parmularius* or the *Scutarius* at the gladiators' fights; from him too I learned endurance of labor, and to want little, and to work with my own hands, and not to meddle with other people's affairs, and not to be ready to listen to slander.

From Diogenetus, not to busy myself about trifling things and not to give credit to what was said by miracle-workers and jugglers about incantations and the driving away of

¹ Selected passages. Translated by George Long.

² The verb *learned* here and elsewhere after *from* in this section is added by the translator. If the author "does not mean to say that he learned all these good things from the several persons whom he mentions, he means that he observed certain good qualities in them, or received certain benefits from them, and it is implied that he was the better for it or at least might have been; for it would be a mistake to understand Marcus as saying that he possessed all the virtues which he observed in his kinsmen and teachers." (Translator's note). See in this connection passages 29 and 34, below.

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dæmons and such things; and not to breed quails for fighting, nor to give myself up passionately to such things; and to endure freedom of speech; and to have become intimate with philosophy; and to have been a hearer, first of Bacchius, then of Tandasis and Marcianus; and to have written dialogues in my youth; and to have desired a plank bed and skin, and whatever else of the kind belongs to the Grecian discipline.

From Rusticus I received the impression that my character required improvement and discipline; and from him I learned not to be led astray to sophistic emulation, nor to writing on speculative matters, nor to delivering little hortatory orations, nor to showing myself off as a man who practices much discipline, or does benevolent acts in order to make a display; and to abstain from rhetoric, and poetry, and fine writing; and not to walk about in the house in my outdoor dress, nor to do other things of the kind; and to write my letters with simplicity, like the letter which Rusticus wrote from Sinuessa to my mother; and with respect to those who have offended me by words, or done me wrong, to be easily disposed to be pacified and reconciled, as soon as they have shown a readiness to be reconciled; and to read carefully, and not to be satisfied with a superficial understanding of a book; nor hastily to give my assent to those who talk overmuch; and I am indebted to him for being acquainted with the discourses of Epictetus, which he communicated to me out of his own collection.

From Apollonius I learned freedom of will and undeviating steadiness of purpose; and to look to nothing else, not even for a moment, except to reason; and to be always the same, in sharp pains, on the occasion of the loss of a child, and in long illness; and to see clearly in a living example that the same man can be both most resolute and yielding, and not peevish in giving his instruction; and to have had before my

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eyes a man who clearly considered his experience and his skill in expounding philosophical principles as the smallest of his merits; and from him I learned how to receive from friends what are esteemed favors, without being either humbled by them or letting them pass unnoticed.

From Sextus, a benevolent disposition, and the example of a family governed in a fatherly manner, and the idea of living conformably to nature; and gravity without affectation, and to look carefully after the interests of friends, and to tolerate ignorant persons, and those who form opinions without consideration: he had the power of readily accommodating himself to all, so that intercourse with him was more agreeable than any flattery; and at the same time he was most highly venerated by those who associated with him: and he had the faculty both of discovering and ordering, in an intelligent and methodical way, the principles necessary for life; and he never showed anger or any other passion, but was entirely free from passion, and also most affectionate; and he could express approbation without noisy display, and he possessed much knowledge without ostentation.

From Alexander the grammarian, to refrain from fault-finding, and not in a reproachful way to chide those who uttered any barbarous or solecistic or strange-sounding expression; but dexterously to introduce the very expression which ought to have been used, and in the way of answer or giving confirmation, or joining in an inquiry about the thing itself, not about the word, or by some other fit suggestion.

From Fronto I learned to observe what envy, and duplicity, and hypocrisy are in a tyrant, and that generally those among us who are called Patricians are rather deficient in paternal affection.

From Alexander the Platonic, not frequently nor without necessity to say to anyone, or to write in a letter, that I have

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no leisure; nor continually to excuse the neglect of duties required by our relation to those with whom we live, by alleging urgent occupations.

From Catulus, not to be indifferent when a friend finds fault, even if he should find fault without reason, but to try to restore him to his usual disposition; and to be ready to speak well of teachers, as it is reported of Domitius and Athenodotus; and to love my children truly.

From my brother Severus, to love my kin, and to love truth, and to love justice; and through him I learned to know Thræsea, Helvidius, Cato, Dion, Brutus; and from him I received the idea of a polity in which there is the same law for all, a polity administered with regard to equal rights and equal freedom of speech, and the idea of a kingly government which respects most of all the freedom of the governed; I learned from him also consistency and undeviating steadiness in my regard for philosophy; and a disposition to do good, and to give to others readily, and to cherish good hopes, and to believe that I am loved by my friends; and in him I observed no concealment of his opinions with respect to those whom he condemned, and that his friends had no need to conjecture what he wished or did not wish, but it was quite plain.

From Maximus I learned self-government, and not to be led aside by anything; and cheerfulness in all circumstances, as well as in illness; and a just admixture in the moral character of sweetness and dignity, and to do what was set before me without complaining. I observed that everybody believed that he thought as he spoke, and that in all that he did he never had any bad intention; and he never showed amazement and surprise, and was never in a hurry, and never put off doing a thing, nor was perplexed nor dejected, nor did he ever laugh to disguise his vexation, nor, on the other hand, was he ever passionate or suspicious. He was accus-

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tomed to do acts of beneficence, and was ready to forgive, and was free from all falsehood; and he presented the appearance of a man who could not be diverted from right rather than of a man who had been improved. I observed, too, that no man could ever think that he was despised by Maximus, or ever venture to think himself a better man. He had also the art of being humorous in an agreeable way.

In my father¹ I observed mildness of temper, and unchangeable resolution in the things which he had determined after due deliberation; and no vainglory in those things which men call honors; and a love of labor and perseverance; and a readiness to listen to those who had anything to propose for the common weal; and undeviating firmness in giving to every man according to his deserts; and a knowledge derived from experience of the occasions for vigorous action and for remission. And . . . he considered himself no more than any other citizen; and he released his friends from all obligations to sup with him or to attend him of necessity when he went abroad, and those who had failed to accompany him, by reason of any urgent circumstances, always found him the same. I observed too his habit of careful inquiry in all matters of deliberation, and his persistency, and that he never stopped his investigation through being satisfied with appearances which first present themselves; and that his disposition was to keep his friends, and not to be soon tired of them, nor yet to be extravagant in his affection; and to be satisfied on all occasions, and cheerful; and to foresee things a long way off, and to provide for the smallest without display; and to check immediately popular applause and all flattery; and to be ever watchful over the things which were necessary for the administration of the empire, and to be a good manager of the expenditure, and patiently to endure the blame which he got for

¹ He means his adoptive father, his predecessor, the Emperor Antoninus Pius. [Translator's note.]

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such conduct; and he was neither superstitious with respect to the gods, nor did he court men by gifts or by trying to please them, or by flattering the populace; but he showed sobriety in all things and firmness, and never any mean thoughts or action, nor love of novelty. And the things which conduce in any way to the commodity of life, and of which fortune gives an abundant supply, he used without arrogance and without excusing himself; so that when he had them, he enjoyed them without affectation, and when he had them not, he did not want them. No one could ever say of him that he was either a sophist or a home-bred flippant slave or a pedant; but every one acknowledged him to be a man ripe, perfect, above flattery, able to manage his own and other men's affairs. Besides this, he honored those who were true philosophers, and he did not reproach those who pretended to be philosophers, nor yet was he easily led by them. He was also easy in conversation, and he made himself agreeable without any offensive affectation. He took a reasonable care of his body's health, not as one who was greatly attached to life, nor out of regard to personal appearance, nor yet in a careless way, but so that, through his own attention, he very seldom stood in need of the physician's art or of medicine or external applications. He was most ready to give way without envy to those who possessed any particular faculty, such as that of eloquence or knowledge of the law or of morals, or of anything else; and he gave them his help, that each might enjoy reputation according to his deserts; and he always acted conformably to the institutions of his country, without showing any affectation of doing so. Further, he was not fond of change nor unsteady, but he loved to stay in the same places, and to employ himself about the same things; and after his paroxysms of headache he came immediately fresh and vigorous to his usual occupations. His secrets were not many, but very few and very rare, and these only about

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public matters; and he showed prudence and economy in the exhibition of the public spectacles and the construction of public buildings, his donations to the people, and in such things, for he was a man who looked to what ought to be done, not to the reputation which is got by a man's acts. He did not take the bath at unseasonable hours; he was not fond of building houses, nor curious about what he ate, nor about the texture and color of his clothes, nor about the beauty of his slaves. His dress came from Lorium, his villa on the coast, and from Lanuvium generally. We know how he behaved to the toll-collector at Tusculum who asked him pardon; and such was all his behavior. There was in him nothing harsh, nor implacable, nor violent, nor, as one may say, anything carried to the sweating point; but he examined all things severally, as if he had abundance of time, and without confusion, in an orderly way, vigorously and consistently. And that might be applied to him which is recorded of Socrates, that he was able both to abstain from, and to enjoy those things which many are too weak to abstain from, and cannot enjoy without excess. But to be strong enough both to bear the one and to be sober in the other is the mark of a man who has a perfect and invincible soul, such as he showed in the illness of Maximus.

To the gods I am indebted for having good grandfathers, good parents, a good sister, good teachers, good associates, good kinsmen and friends, nearly everything good. Further, I owe it to the gods that I was not hurried into any offenses against any of them, though I had a disposition which, if opportunity had offered, might have led me to do something of this kind; but, through their favor, there never was such a concurrence of circumstances as put me to the trial. Further, I am thankful to the gods that I was not longer brought up with my grandfather's concubine, and that I preserved the flower of my youth, and that I did not make proof of my

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virility before the proper season, but even deferred the time; that I was subjected to a ruler and a father who was able to take away all pride from me, and to bring me to the knowledge that it is possible for a man to live in a palace without wanting either guards or embroidered dresses, or torches and statues, and such-like show; but that it is in such a man's power to bring himself very near to the fashion of a private person, without being for this reason either meaner in thought, or more remiss in action, with respect to the things which must be done for the public interest in a manner that befits a ruler. I thank the gods for giving me such a brother, who was able by his moral character to rouse me to vigilance over myself, and who, at the same time, pleased me by his respect and affection; that my children have not been stupid nor deformed in body; that I did not make more proficiency in rhetoric, poetry, and the other studies, in which I should perhaps have been completely engaged, if I had seen that I was making progress in them; that I made haste to place those who brought me up in the station of honor which they seemed to desire, without putting them off with hope of my doing it some time after, because they were then still young; that I knew Apollonius, Rusticus, Maximus; and I received clear and frequent impressions about living according to nature, and what kind of a life that is, so that, so far as depended on the gods, and their gifts, and help, and inspirations, nothing hindered me from forthwith living according to nature, though I still fall short of it through my own fault, and through not observing the admonitions of the gods, and, I may almost say, their direct instructions; that my body has held out so long in such a kind of life; that . . . after having fallen into amatory passions, I was cured; and, though I was often out of humor with Rusticus, I never did anything of which I had occasion to repent; that, though it was my mother's fate to die young, she spent the last years of her life with me; that,

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whenever I wished to help any man in his need, or on any other occasion, I was never told that I had not the means of doing it; and that to myself the same necessity never happened, to receive anything from another; that I have such a wife, so obedient, and so affectionate, and so simple; that I had abundance of good masters for my children; and that remedies have been shown to me by dreams, both others, and against blood-spitting and giddiness . . . ; and that, when I had an inclination to philosophy, I did not fall into the hands of any sophist, and that I did not waste my time on writers of histories, or in the resolution of syllogisms, or occupy myself about the investigation of appearances in the heavens; for all these things require the help of the gods and fortune.

2 Begin the morning by saying to thyself, I shall meet with the busybody, the ungrateful, arrogant, deceitful, envious, unsocial. All these things happen to them by reason of their ignorance of what is good and evil. But I who have seen the nature of the good that it is beautiful, and of the bad that it is ugly, and the nature of him who does wrong, that it is akin to me, not only of the same blood or seed, but that it participates in the same intelligence and the same portions of the divinity, I can neither be injured by any of them, for no one can fix on me what is ugly, nor can I be angry with my kinsman, nor hate him. For we are made for co-operation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and lower teeth. To act against one another then is contrary to nature; and it is acting against one another to be vexed and to turn away.

3 Every moment think steadily as a Roman and a man to do what thou hast in hand with perfect and simple dignity, and feeling of affection, and freedom, and justice; and to give thyself relief from all other thoughts. And thou wilt

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give thyself relief, if thou doest every act of thy life as if it were the last, laying aside all carelessness and passionate aversion from the commands of reason, and all hypocrisy, and self-love, and discontent with the portion which has been given to thee. Thou seest how few the things are, the which if a man lays hold of, he is able to live a life which flows in quiet, and is like the existence of the gods; for the gods on their part will require nothing more from him who observes these things.

4. Of human life the time is a point, and the substance is in a flux, and the perception dull, and the composition of the whole body subject to putrefaction, and the soul a whirl, and fortune hard to divine, and fame a thing devoid of judgment. And, to say all in a word, everything which belongs to the body is a stream, and what belongs to the soul is a dream and vapor, and life is a warfare and a stranger's sojourn, and after-fame is oblivion. What then is that which is able to conduct a man? One thing and only one, philosophy. But this consists in keeping the dæmon within a man free from violence and unharmed, superior to pains and pleasures, doing nothing without a purpose, nor yet falsely and with hypocrisy, not feeling the need of another man's doing or not doing anything; and besides, accepting all that happens, and all that is allotted, as coming from thence, wherever it is, from whence he himself came; and, finally, waiting for death with a cheerful mind, as being nothing else than a dissolution of the elements of which every living being is compounded. But if there is no harm to the elements themselves in each continually changing into another, why should a man have any apprehension about the change and dissolution of all the elements? For it is according to nature, and nothing is evil which is according to nature.

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5 Do not waste the remainder of thy life in thoughts about others, when thou dost not refer thy thoughts to some object of common utility. For thou lovest the opportunity of doing something else when thou hast such thoughts as these, What is such a person doing, and why, and what is he saying, and what is he thinking of, and what is he contriving?—and whatever else of the kind makes us wander away from the observation of our own ruling power. We ought then to check in the series of our thoughts everything that is without a purpose and useless, but most of all the over-curious feeling and the malignant; and a man should use himself to think of those things only about which if one should suddenly ask, What hast thou now in thy thoughts? with perfect openness thou mightest immediately answer, This or That; so that from thy words it should be plain that everything in thee is simple and benevolent, and such as befits a social animal, and one that cares not for thoughts about pleasure or sensual enjoyments at all, nor has any rivalry or envy and suspicion, or anything else for which thou wouldst blush if thou shouldst say that thou hadst it in thy mind.

6 No longer wander at hazard; for neither wilt thou read thy own memoirs, nor the acts of the ancient Romans and Hellenes, and the selections from books which thou wast reserving for thy old age. Hasten then to the end which thou hast before thee, and, throwing away idle hopes, come to thy own aid, if thou carest at all for thyself, while it is in thy power.

7 Men seek retreats for themselves, houses in the country, seashores, and mountains; and thou too art wont to desire such things very much. But this is altogether a mark of the most common sort of men, for it is in thy power whenever thou shalt choose to retire into thyself. For nowhere either

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with more quiet or more freedom from trouble does a man retire than into his own soul, particularly when he has within him such thoughts that by looking into them he is immediately in perfect tranquillity; and I affirm that tranquillity is nothing else than the good ordering of the mind. Constantly then give to thyself this retreat, and renew thyself; and let thy principles be brief and fundamental, which, as soon as thou shalt recur to them, will be sufficient to cleanse the soul completely, and to send thee back free from all discontent with the things to which thou returnest.

8 How much trouble he avoids who does not look to see what his neighbor says or does or thinks, but only to what he does himself, that it may be just and pure; or as Agathon says, look not round at the depraved morals of others, but run straight along the line without deviating from it.

9 Occupy thyself with few things, says the philosopher, if thou wouldst be tranquil.—But consider if it would not be better to say, Do what is necessary, and whatever the reason of the animal which is naturally social requires, and as it requires. For this brings not only the tranquillity which comes from doing well, but also that which comes from doing few things. For the greatest part of what we say and do being unnecessary, if a man takes this away, he will have more leisure and less uneasiness. Accordingly, on every occasion a man should ask himself, Is this one of the unnecessary things? Now a man should take away not only unnecessary acts, but also unnecessary thoughts, for thus superfluous acts will not follow after.

10 Consider, for example, the times of Vespasian. Thou wilt see all these things, people marrying, bringing up children, sick, dying, warring, feasting, trafficking, cultivating the ground, flattering, obstinately arrogant, suspecting, plotting,

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wishing for some to die, grumbling about the present, loving, heaping up treasure, desiring consulship, kingly power. Well then, that life of these people no longer exists at all. Again, remove to the times of Trajan. Again, all is the same. Their life too is gone. In like manner view also the other epochs of time and of whole nations, and see how many after great efforts soon fell and were resolved into the elements. But chiefly thou shouldst think of those whom thou hast thyself known distracting themselves about idle things, neglecting to do what was in accordance with their proper constitution, and to hold firmly to this and to be content with it.

11 Be like the promontory against which the waves continually break, but it stands firm and tames the fury of the water around it.

12 In the morning when thou risest unwillingly, let this thought be present—I am rising to the work of a human being. Why then am I dissatisfied if I am going to do the things for which I exist and for which I was brought into the world? Or have I been made for this, to lie in the bed-clothes and keep myself warm?—But this is more pleasant—Dost thou exist then to take thy pleasure, and not at all for action or exertion? Dost thou not see the little plants, the little birds, the ants, the spiders, the bees working together to put in order their several parts of the universe? And art thou unwilling to do the work of a human being, and dost thou not make haste to do that which is according to thy nature?—But it is necessary to take rest also—It is necessary: however, nature has fixed bounds to this too: she has fixed bounds both to eating and drinking, and yet thou goest beyond these bounds, beyond what is sufficient; yet in thy acts it is not so, but thou stoppest short of what thou canst do. So thou lovest not thyself, for if thou didst, thou wouldst

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love thy nature and her will. But those who love their several arts exhaust themselves in working at them unwashed and without food; but thou valuest thy own nature less than the turner values the turning art, or the dancer the dancing art, or the lover of money values his money, or the vainglorious man his little glory. And such men, when they have a violent affection to a thing, choose neither to eat nor to sleep rather than not to perfect the things which they care for. But are the acts which concern society more vile in thy eyes and less worthy of thy labor?

13 Thou sayest, Men cannot admire the sharpness of thy wits—Be it so: but there are many other things of which thou canst not say, I am not formed for them by nature. Show those qualities then which are altogether in thy power, sincerity, gravity, endurance of labor, aversion to pleasure, contentment with thy portion and with few things, benevolence, frankness, no love of superfluity, freedom from trifling, magnanimity. Dost thou not see how many qualities thou art immediately able to exhibit, in which there is no excuse of natural incapacity and unfitness, and yet thou still remainest voluntarily below the mark? or art thou compelled through being defectively furnished by nature to murmur, and to be stingy, and to flatter, and to find fault with thy poor body, and to try to please men, and to make great display, and to be so restless in thy mind? No, by the gods: but thou mightest have been delivered from these things long ago. Only if in truth thou canst be charged with being rather slow and dull of comprehension, thou must exert thyself about this also, not neglecting it nor yet taking pleasure in thy dullness.

14 One man, when he has done a service to another, is ready to set it down to his account as a favor conferred. Another is not ready to do this, but still in his own mind he

thinks of the man as his debtor, and he knows what he has done. A third in a manner does not even know what he has done, but he is like a vine which has produced grapes, and seeks for nothing more after it has once produced its proper fruit. As a horse when he has run, a dog when he has tracked the game, a bee when it has made the honey, so a man when he has done a good act, does not call out for others to come and see, but he goes on to another act, as a vine goes on to produce again the grapes in season—Must a man then be one of these, who in a manner act thus without observing it?—Yes.

15 Be not disgusted, nor discouraged, nor dissatisfied, if thou dost not succeed in doing everything according to right principles; but when thou hast failed, return back again, and be content if the greater part of what thou doest is consistent with man's nature, and love this to which thou returnest; and do not return to philosophy as if she were a master, but act like those who have sore eyes and apply a bit of sponge and egg, or as another applies a plaster, or drenching with water. For thus thou wilt not fail to obey reason, and thou wilt repose in it. And remember that philosophy requires only the things which thy nature requires; but thou wouldst have something else which is not according to nature—It may be objected, Why, what is more agreeable than this which I am doing?—But is not this the very reason why pleasure deceives us? And consider if magnanimity, freedom, simplicity, equanimity, piety, are not more agreeable. For what is more agreeable than wisdom itself, when thou thinkest of the security and the happy course of all things which depend on the faculty of understanding and knowledge?

16 About what am I now employing my own soul? On every occasion I must ask myself this question, and inquire,

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what have I now in this part of me which they call the ruling principle? and whose soul have I now? that of a child, or of a young man, or of a feeble woman, or of a tyrant, or of a domestic animal, or of a wild beast?

17 Such as are thy habitual thoughts, such also will be the character of thy mind; for the soul is dyed by the thoughts. Dye it then with a continuous series of such thoughts as these: for instance, that where a man can live, there he can also live well. But he must live in a palace;—well then, he can also live well in a palace.

18 [“He has been enumerating the higher consolations which may support a man at the approach of death.”] But if thou requirest also a vulgar kind of comfort which shall reach thy heart, thou wilt be made best reconciled to death by observing the objects from which thou art going to be removed, and the morals of those with whom thy soul will no longer be mingled. For it is no way right to be offended with men, but it is thy duty to care for them and to bear with them gently; and yet to remember that thy departure will not be from men who have the same principles as thyself. For this is the only thing, if there be any, which could draw us the contrary way and attach us to life, to be permitted to live with those who have the same principles as ourselves. But now thou seest how great is the distress caused by the difference of those who live together, so that thou mayest say: “Come quick, O death, lest perchance I too should forget myself.”

19 When thou hast been compelled by circumstances to be disturbed in a manner, quickly return to thyself and do not continue out of tune longer than the compulsion lasts;

for thou wilt have more mastery over the harmony by continually recurring to it.

20 If thou hadst a stepmother and a mother at the same time, thou wouldst be dutiful to thy stepmother, but still thou wouldst constantly return to thy mother. Let the court and philosophy now be to thee stepmother and mother: return to philosophy frequently and repose in her, through whom what thou meetest with in the court appears to thee tolerable, and thou appearest tolerable in the court.

21 If any man is able to convince me and show me that I do not think or act right, I will gladly change; for I seek the truth, by which no man was ever injured. But he is injured who abides in his error and ignorance.

22 If the gods have determined about me and about the things which must happen to me, they have determined well, for it is not easy even to imagine a deity without forethought; and as to doing me harm, why should they have any desire towards that? for what advantage would result to them from this or to the whole, which is the special object of their providence? But if they have not determined about me individually, they have certainly determined about the whole at least, and the things which happen by way of sequence in this general arrangement I ought to accept with pleasure and to be content with them. But if they determine about nothing—which it is wicked to believe, or if we do believe it, let us neither sacrifice nor pray nor swear by them nor do anything else which we do as if the gods were present and lived with us—but if, however, the gods determine about none of the things which concern us, I am able to determine about myself, and I can inquire about that which is useful; and that is useful to every man which is conformable to his own consti-

tution and nature. But my nature is rational and social; and my city and country, so far as I am Antoninus, is Rome, but so far as I am a man, it is the world. The things then which are useful to these cities are alone useful to me.

23 When thou wishest to delight thyself, think of the virtues of those who live with thee; for instance, the activity of one, and the modesty of another, and the liberality of a third, and some other good quality of a fourth. For nothing delights so much as the examples of the virtues, when they are exhibited in the morals of those who live with us and present themselves in abundance, as far as is possible. Wherefore we must keep them before us.

24 Think not so much of what thou hast not as of what thou hast: but of the things which thou hast select the best, and then reflect how eagerly they would have been sought, if thou hadst them not. At the same time, however, take care that thou dost not through being so pleased with them accustom thyself to overvalue them, so as to be disturbed if ever thou shouldst not have them.

25 Retire into thyself. The rational principle which rules has this nature, that it is content with itself when it does what is just, and so secures tranquillity.

26 Consider thyself to be dead, and to have completed thy life up to the present time; and live according to nature¹ the remainder which is allowed thee.

27 The body ought to be compact, and to show no irregularity either in motion or attitude. For what the mind

¹ "The end of all his [Marcus Aurelius's] philosophy is to live conformably to Nature, both a man's own nature and the nature of the Universe."
—George Long.

shows in the face by maintaining in it the expression of intelligence and propriety, that ought to be required also in the whole body. But all these things should be observed without affectation.

28 How do we know if Telauges was not superior in character to Socrates? for it is not enough that Socrates died a more noble death, and disputed more skillfully with the sophists, and passed the night in the cold with more endurance, and that when he was bid to arrest Leon of Salamis, he considered it more noble to refuse, and that he walked in a swaggering way in the streets—though as to this fact one may have great doubts if it was true. But we ought to inquire, what kind of a soul it was that Socrates possessed, and if he was able to be content with being just towards men and pious towards the gods, neither idly vexed on account of men's villainy, nor yet making himself a slave to any man's ignorance, nor receiving as strange anything that fell to his share out of the universal, nor enduring it as intolerable, nor allowing his understanding to sympathize with the effects of the miserable flesh.

29 This reflection also tends to the removal of the desire of empty fame, that it is no longer in thy power to have lived the whole of thy life, or at least thy life from thy youth upwards, like a philosopher; but both to many others and to thyself it is plain that thou art far from philosophy. Thou hast fallen into disorder then, so that it is no longer easy for thee to get the reputation of a philosopher; and thy plan of life also opposes it. If, then, thou hast truly seen where the matter lies, throw away the thought, how thou shalt seem to others, and be content if thou shalt live the rest of thy life in such wise as thy nature wills. Observe then what it wills, and let nothing else distract thee; for

Thou hast had experience of many wanderings without having found happiness anywhere, not in syllogisms, nor in wealth, nor in reputation, nor in enjoyment, nor anywhere. Where is it then? In doing what man's nature requires. How then shall a man do this? If he has principles from which come his effects and his acts. What principles? Those which relate to good and bad: the belief that there is nothing good for man, which does not make him just, temperate, manly, free; and that there is nothing bad, which does not do the contrary to what has been mentioned.

30 Alexander and Caius and Pompeius, what are they in comparison with Diogenes and Heraclitus and Socrates? For they [the latter] were acquainted with things, and their causes, and their matter, and the ruling principles of these men were conformable to their pursuits. But as to the others, how many things had they to care for, and to how many things were they slaves!

31 Thou hast not leisure to read. But thou hast leisure to check arrogance: thou hast leisure to be superior to pleasure and pain: thou hast leisure to be superior to love of fame, and not to be vexed at stupid and ungrateful people, nay even to care for them.

32 As the nature of the universal has given to every rational being all the other powers that it has, so we have received from it this power also. For as the universal nature converts and fixes in its predestined place everything which stands in the way and opposes it, and makes such things a part of itself, so also the rational animal is able to make every hindrance its own material, and to use it for such purposes as it may have designed.

33 Soon will the earth cover us all: then the earth, too, will change, and the things also which result from changes will continue to change forever, and these again forever. For if a man reflects on the changes and transformations which follow one another like wave after wave, and their rapidity, he will despise everything which is perishable.

34 When thou hast assumed these names, good, modest, true, rational, a man of equanimity, and magnanimous, take care that thou dost not change these names; and if thou shouldst lose them, quickly return to them. And remember that the term Rational was intended to signify a discriminating attention to every several thing and freedom from negligence; and that Equanimity is the voluntary acceptance of the things which are assigned to thee by the common nature; and that Magnanimity is the elevation of the intelligent part above the pleasurable or painful sensations of the flesh, and above that poor thing called fame, and death, and all such things. If, then, thou maintainest thyself in the possession of these names, without desiring to be called by these names by others, thou wilt be another person and wilt enter on another life. For to continue to be such as thou hast hitherto been, and to be torn in pieces and defiled in such a life, is the character of a very stupid man and one overfond of his life, and like those half-devoured fighters with wild beasts, who though covered with wounds and gore, still intreat to be kept to the following day, though they will be exposed in the same state to the same claws and bites. Therefore fix thyself in the possession of these few names: and if thou art able to abide in them, abide as if thou wast removed to certain islands of the Happy.

35 Short is the little which remains to thee of life. Live as on a mountain. For it makes no difference whether a man lives there or here, if he lives everywhere in the world as in a

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state. Let men see, let them know a real man who lives according to nature. If they cannot endure him, let them kill him. For that is better than to live as men do.

36 No longer talk at all about the kind of man that a good man ought to be, but be such.

37 To him who is penetrated by true principles even the briefest precept is sufficient, and any common precept, to remind him that he should be free from grief and fear. For example—

Leaves, some the wind scatters on the ground—
So is the race of men.

Leaves, also, are thy children; and leaves, too, are they who cry out as if they were worthy of credit and bestow their praise, or on the contrary curse, or secretly blame and sneer; and leaves, in like manner, are those who shall receive and transmit a man's fame to after-times. For all such things as these "are produced in the season of spring," as the poet says; then the wind casts them down; then the forest produces other leaves in their places. But a brief existence is common to all things and yet thou avoidest and pursuest all things as if they would be eternal. A little time, and thou shalt close thy eyes; and him who has attended thee to thy grave another soon will lament.

38 The healthy eye ought to see all visible things and not to say, I wish for green things; for this is the condition of a diseased eye. And the healthy hearing and smelling ought to be ready to perceive all that can be heard and smelled. And the healthy stomach ought to be with respect to all food just as the mill with respect to all things which it is formed to grind. And accordingly the healthy understanding ought

to be prepared for everything which happens; but that which says, Let my dear children live, and let all men praise whatever I may do, is an eye which seeks for green things, or teeth which seek for soft things.

39 Suppose any man shall despise me. Let him look to that himself. But I will look to this, that I be not discovered doing or saying anything deserving of contempt. Shall any man hate me? Let him look to it. But I will be mild and benevolent towards every man, and ready to show even him his mistake, not reproachfully, nor yet as making a display of my endurance, but nobly and honestly, like the great Phocion,¹ unless indeed he only assumed it. For the interior parts ought to be such, and a man ought to be seen by the gods neither dissatisfied with anything nor complaining. For what evil is it to thee, if thou art now doing what is agreeable to thy own nature, and art satisfied with that which at this moment is suitable to the nature of the universe, since thou art a human being placed at thy post in order that what is for the common advantage may be done in some way?

40 Men despise one another and flatter one another; and men wish to raise themselves above one another, and crouch before one another.

41 The Pythagoreans bid us in the morning look to the heavens that we may be reminded of those bodies which continually do the same things and in the same manner perform their work, and also be reminded of their purity and nudity. For there is no veil over a star.

42 Neither in writing nor in reading wilt thou be able to lay down rules for others before thou shalt have first

¹ An Athenian general and statesman of the fourth century B. C.

learned to obey rules thyself. Much more is this so in life.

43 I have often wondered how it is that every man loves himself more than all the rest of men, but yet sets less value on his own opinion of himself than on the opinion of others. If then a god or a wise teacher should present himself to a man and bid him to think of nothing and to design nothing which he would not express as soon as he conceived it, he could not endure it even for a single day. So much more respect have we to what our neighbors shall think of us than to what we shall think of ourselves.

44 Thou wilt not cease to be miserable till thy mind is in such a condition, that, what luxury is to those who enjoy pleasure, such shall be to thee, in every matter which presents itself, the doing of the things which are conformable to man's constitution; for a man ought to consider as an enjoyment everything which it is in his power to do according to his own nature,—and it is in his power everywhere.

Benvenuto Cellini

IT was now the month of August, 1545; and our Duke² I was living at Poggio a Cajano, about ten miles from Florence. So there I went to see him, merely in the course of my duty—since I, too, was a Florentine citizen; since my ancestors were very friendly with the house of Medici, and I as much as any man loved Duke Cosimo. So, as I say, I went to Poggio only to pay my respects, and with not the least intention of stopping with him—as it pleased God, who doeth all things well, that I should do. When I came into the Duke's presence, he received me with great kindness; and then he and the Duchess asked me all about the work I had been doing for the King.³ With the greatest good-will I explained everything bit by bit. He listened, and then replied he had heard it was indeed so, adding, with a gesture of compassion, "A poor reward for all your great labors! Benvenuto, my friend, if you were to undertake work for me I should pay you very differently to that King of yours, of whom, out of your good-nature, you speak so well." To this I replied by explaining the great obligations I was under to his Majesty, who had first freed me from an unjust prison, and then given me such a chance of making wonderful masterpieces as had never fallen to the lot of any of my artist peers. While I was speaking thus, the Duke writhed with impatience, and looked as if he could hardly stay to hear me out. When I had finished, he said, "If you will work for

¹ From Miss Macdonell's translation of the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini. Reprinted with the permission of E. P. Dutton & Company.

² Cosimo I, Duke of Florence, of the house of Medici.

³ Francis I, King of France.

me, I will give you such rewards as may perhaps astonish you—provided the result pleases me, and of that I have no doubt at all.” And so, poor unlucky wight! wishing to prove to the masters of our wonderful school, that since I left Florence I had been striving for success in other departments of art besides those which they deemed mine, I answered that I would willingly make a great statue in marble or in bronze for his fine Piazza. To this he replied that, to begin with, he would like from me a Perseus. This had been long in his mind; and he begged me to make a model of it for him. So I set to the task with great good-will, and in a few weeks I had finished it. It was made of yellow wax, about a cubit in height, and very delicately wrought; for I had given all my best skill and knowledge to the making of it. The Duke returned to Florence; but several days went by before I could show him the model. Indeed, from his indifference you might have judged he had never seen or heard of me; and this boded ill, I thought, for my dealings with his Excellency. However, one day after dinner I took my model to the Wardrobe,¹ and he came to see it along with the Duchess and some lords of his court. As soon as he set eyes on it, he was so pleased, and praised it so extravagantly, that I had good hope of having found in him a patron of some discrimination. He examined it for a long time with ever-growing delight, and then he said, “Benvenuto, my friend, if you were to carry out this little model on a large scale, it would be the finest thing in the Piazza.” Thereupon I replied, “My most excellent lord, in the Piazza are works by the great Donatello and the marvelous Michael Angelo, the two greatest men since the ancients. Nevertheless, as your most illustrious Excellency is so encouraging to my model, I feel within me the power to do the complete work three times as well.” These words of mine stirred up

¹ A room in the palace.

a deal of argument; for the Duke kept saying that he understood such things perfectly, and knew just what could be done. I replied that my work would decide this dispute and his doubt, though most certainly I should achieve more for his Excellency than I had promised him. Then I asked him to give me the means of carrying out the undertaking, as otherwise I could do nothing. The Duke replied that I should draw up a formal demand, stating precisely my wants, and he would order these to be amply provided for. Now, of a truth, if I had been shrewd enough to obtain by contract all I needed for my work, I should have escaped the greatest annoyances which, by my own fault, I afterwards experienced. For he seemed most determined to have the work done, and to make the necessary preparations for it. But I, who did not know that his lordship was more of a merchant than a duke, treated with him most liberally, as duke rather than merchant. I drew up the petition, and it seemed to me that his Excellency most generously responded. In it I said, "Rarest of patrons, the real petition I make and the true contract between us do not consist in these words and writings. The essential is, that I succeed according to the word I have given. And when I have succeeded, I am as sure that your most illustrious Excellency will keep in good mind all he has promised me." The Duke was delighted with my words and my demeanor; and he and the Duchess heaped more favors on me than I can describe.

While I was having the workshop built for making the Perseus, I worked in a basement chamber. There I made the Perseus of gesso,¹ the same size as the finished statue was to be, intending to cast it from this mould. But when I saw that this method was a rather lengthy one, I resorted to another plan. By this time, I must tell you, there had

¹ Plaster of Paris.

been built, brick by brick, a miserable kind of a workshop, so wretchedly constructed that I can't bear to think of it. There I began the figure of the Medusa.¹ First I made a framework of iron, then covered it with clay; and when that was done, I baked it. I had only some little apprentices to help me. One of these, a very handsome lad, the son of La Gambetta the prostitute, I used as a model, since no books teach art as does the human figure. I tried to secure workmen, that I might make speed with the business; but I could find none, and I could not do everything by myself. There were some in Florence who would have willingly come; but Bandinelli put a stop to that;² and then after making me waste a deal of time, he told the Duke I was trying to steal away his workmen, because I found I should

¹ The process by which Cellini cast his statue—the “*à cire perdue*,” or “lost wax” process—is thus briefly described in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*: “If a statue was to be cast, the figure was first roughly modeled in clay—only rather smaller in all its dimensions than the future bronze; all over this a skin of wax was laid, and worked by the sculptor with modeling tools to the required form and finish. A mixture of pounded brick, clay and ashes was then ground finely in water to the consistence of cream, and successive coats of this mixture were then applied with a brush, till a second skin was formed all over the wax, fitting closely into every line and depression of the modeling. Soft clay was then carefully laid on to strengthen the mould, in considerable thickness, till the whole statue appeared like a shapeless mass of clay, round which iron hoops were bound to hold it all together. The whole was then thoroughly dried, and placed in a hot oven, which baked the clay, both of the core and the outside mould, and melted the wax, which was allowed to run out from small holes made for the purpose. Thus a hollow was left, corresponding to the skin of wax between the core and the mould, the relative positions of which were preserved by various small rods of bronze, which had previously been driven through from the outer mould to the rough core. The mould was now ready, and melted bronze was poured in till the whole space between the core and the outer mould was full. After slowly cooling, the outer mould was broken away from outside the statue and the inner core as much as possible broken up and raked out through a hole in the foot or some other part of the statue. The projecting rods of bronze were then cut away, and the whole finished by rubbing down and polishing over any roughness or defective places. The most skillful sculptors, however, had but little of this after-touching to do, the final modeling and even polish which they had put upon the wax being faithfully reproduced in the bronze casting.” (Reprinted with the permission of The Encyclopædia Britannica Company.)

² Bandinelli, sculptor and painter, was the rival and enemy of Cellini at the Florentine court.

never be able to put together so large a figure by myself. I complained to the Duke how the brute annoyed me, and begged him to let me have some of the workmen belonging to the Opera del Duomo. But my words only convinced him of what Bandinelli had said; and seeing this I began to do my best unaided. While I was working thus day and night, my sister's husband took ill, and died after a few days, leaving my sister, who was still young, with six daughters, big and little, to my care. This was the first great trouble I had in Florence, being left father and guide of such an unhappy family.

Anxious that nothing should go wrong, I sent for two laborers to clear the rubbish out of my garden. They came from the Ponte Vecchio, one of them an old man of sixty, the other a lad of eighteen. When they had been with me about three days, the lad told me that the old man refused to work, and that I should do better to send him away; for not only did he do nothing himself, but he kept him from working also. He said that the little there was to do, he could do by himself, without throwing money away on any one else. This young man was called Bernardino Mannellini of Mugello. Seeing him so ready for hard work, I asked him if he would agree to be my servant; and the matter was settled on the spot. He took care of my house, worked in the garden, and afterwards learned to help me in the workshop; so that, bit by bit, he began to learn my art with great cleverness, and I never had a better helper. Thus, having resolved to do the whole business with only this young man's aid, I began to prove to the Duke that Bandinelli had been telling lies, and that I could get on excellently without any of his men.

About this time I suffered somewhat from an affection of the loins; and as I could not work, I was not ill pleased to hang about the Wardrobe of the Duke with certain young

goldsmiths called Gianpagolo and Domenico Poggini. Under my orders they made a little gold vase, worked in low relief with figures and other lovely ornaments. It was for the Duchess. His Excellency had ordered it for her to drink water out of. He also asked me to make her a golden belt, which was to be very richly worked with jewels, and a great many charming masks and other things. This I also did. Every now and then the Duke would come into the Wardrobe; and he took the greatest pleasure in seeing me work and talking with me. When I got a little better, I sent for clay, and while the Duke was amusing himself there, I did his portrait larger than life. He was so satisfied with this work, and grew so fond of me, that he said nothing would please him better than that arrangements should be made for me to work in the palace. So he looked out large rooms where I could set up my furnaces and all my necessary apparatus; for he took the greatest interest in everything pertaining to my art. But I told his Excellency that it was not possible; for if I did so, I should not have finished the work I had undertaken in a thousand years.

I was getting on with my great statue of Medusa. As I have said, I had made a framework of iron. Then I laid on the clay, according to the anatomy of the figure, about half an inch thinner than the finished figure was meant to be. Afterwards I baked it well, and spread wax on the top, modeling this with the utmost care. The Duke, who often came to see it, was so afraid I might fail with the bronze, that he would have liked me to call in some master to cast it for me.

The first thing I ever cast in bronze was the large portrait bust of his Excellency, which I had modeled in clay in the Pogginis' workshop, while I had the pain in my back. It was a work that gave much pleasure, yet I only did it to gain

experience in clays suitable for casting in bronze. I knew that the wonderful Donatello had used Florence clay for casting his bronzes; but it seemed to me that he had worked under tremendous difficulties. This I believed to be due to some defect in the clay; so before beginning to cast my Perseus, I wished first to make some experiments. These taught me that the clay was good; only the admirable Donatello had not quite understood it: for I saw that his works had been cast with endless difficulty. So, as I have mentioned, I compounded the clay by a special process, and found it most serviceable. Then, as I have said, I cast the head with it. As I had as yet made no furnace, I used that of Maestro Zanobi di Pagno, the bell-founder. When I saw that the bust came out with great precision, I began without delay to set up a small furnace in the shop which the Duke had had arranged for me, according to my own plan and design, in the house which he had given me.¹ As soon as the furnace was ready, with all haste possible I made my preparations for casting the statue of Medusa, that woman writhing under the feet of Perseus. The casting was a matter of the utmost difficulty; and to avoid any mistake, I determined to use all the knowledge I had been at such pains to acquire. Thus the first cast I made in my little furnace was perfectly successful; and so clean was it that my friends thought there was no need for me to touch it up again. Of course, certain Germans and Frenchmen, who plume themselves on knowing wonderful secrets, declare they can cast bronze so that it needs no retouching; but this is foolish talk; for after bronze has been cast, it must be worked on with hammers and chisels in the fashion of the marvelous antique masters, and of the moderns too; at least, such moderns as have learnt anything at all about the matter. His Excellency was so much pleased that several times he came to my house to see it, thus putting heart into

¹ Alluding to an earlier passage in the autobiography.

me to do my best. But the rabid envy of Bandinelli, who was always whispering harm of me in the Duke's ears, had such influence on him, that he was persuaded to think my having cast a single statue was no proof I could put the whole together. It was a new art to me; and his Excellency should take heed lest he was throwing his money away, he said. Words like these breathed in the ears of my glorious Duke, so swayed him that certain moneys for service were disallowed me after this, so that I was forced to expostulate somewhat warmly with his Excellency. One morning, therefore, when I had waited for him in the *Via de' Servi*, I said to him, "My lord, as I no longer receive my necessary supplies, I fear your Excellency has lost trust in me. But I assure you once more that I have it in me to carry out this work three times as well as the model. This, indeed, I have already promised you."

I perceived that my words had no effect on his Excellency, for he made me no answer. Then all at once rage took hold on me; and I was filled with an intolerable heat of passion, which broke forth in these words, "My lord, this city has in truth ever been the school of noble genius. But when a man has become conscious of his power, and has won some little skill in his art, if he would fain enhance the honor of his city and of his glorious prince, he had best go and work elsewhere. And that this is so, my lord, I need not insist; for your Excellency knows what manner of men were Donatello and the great Leonardo da Vinci, and what are the powers of the marvelous Michael Angelo Buonarroti in our own day. Their great talents have given increase to the glory of your Excellency. And so I, too, hope to do my part. Therefore, my lord, give me leave to go. But let your lordship be warned; and give no such leave to Bandinelli. Let him have even greater rewards than he asks of you; for were he to go abroad, such is his presumptuous ignorance,

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that he would of a surety bring shame on our most noble school. Now give me leave to go, my lord; nor do I ask other recompense for my labors to this hour than the good-will of your most illustrious Excellency." When he saw I was in earnest, he turned to me with something like vexation, and said, "Benvenuto, if you have a mind to finish the work, you shall want for nothing." Then I thanked him, and said my one desire was to prove to those envious persons that I was man enough to carry through the work as I had promised. So I parted from his Excellency; and after this some trifling help was given me; but I was forced to dip into my own pocket, that the work might advance at even a moderate pace.

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The Duchess would often ask me to do goldsmith's work for her, to which I was wont to answer, that I was well known to everybody throughout all Italy for a skillful goldsmith; but that Italy had never yet seen sculpture from my hand. True, in the profession there were certain sculptors, mad with envy of me, who laughed at me, and called me the new sculptor. "I hope to show these," said I, "that I am an old sculptor, if God but give me grace to complete my Perseus, and set it up in his Excellency's magnificent Piazza." Then I retired to my house, and gave my mind to work day and night, never showing myself in the palace. But nevertheless I was fain to keep in the good graces of the Duchess; and therefore I had some silver vases made for her, about the size of those little pots you buy for a farthing, chased with lovely masks after the rarest antique fashion. When I took them to her, she received me with the greatest kindness imaginable; and paid for the silver and gold I had used for them. Then I recommended myself to her, and begged her to say to his Excellency that I had had little help in my great work, also to counsel him to trust less in that evil-tongued Bandinelli, who was keeping me from completing my Perseus. The

tears stood in my eyes as I uttered these words. The Duchess shrugged her shoulders, and said, "Surely the Duke must know this Bandinelli to be a worthless creature."

About this time I was staying much at home, rarely appearing at the palace, and working with the utmost energy to finish my statue. I was forced to pay the workmen out of my own purse; for the Duke, who had ordered Lattanzio Gorini to pay them for about eighteen months, got weary of the business, and withdrew the order. When I asked Lattanzio why he no longer paid me, he answered, shaking his spidery hands, and in his tiny buzzing voice like a gnat's, "Why do you not finish your work? It is believed you'll never carry it through." I answered him hotly and said, "The devil take you and all who believe I shall never finish the thing!"

In despair, I went home to my unfortunate Perseus, and not without tears; for I called to mind the favorable conditions of my life in Paris when I was in the service of the great King Francis. There I had everything and to spare; and here all was lacking. More than once I was inclined to give up in desperation.

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I had cast the Medusa, and it had come out perfectly; so I had great hopes of doing as well with my Perseus. The wax had been worked over it; and I assured myself that in bronze it would be just as successful as the Medusa. In wax the thing looked so fine that the Duke was much pleased with its beauty. But either some one had made him believe that it would fail in bronze, or he imagined this of himself; at all events one day, when he had come to see me, which he did with uncommon frequency at that time, he said to me, "Benvenuto, this statue cannot be a success in bronze—for the rules of the art do not permit of it." I felt the words of his Excellency very keenly, and I replied, "My lord, I know you have little faith in me; and this I believe is due to your

having too much faith in those who speak ill of me, or because you know nothing of the matter." He hardly let me finish my words ere he cut in, "I profess to know a great deal; and what is more, I do know what I am talking about." Whereupon I replied, "Yes, like a prince; not as an artist. For did your Excellency understand the matter as you think you do, you would believe me on the strength of the great bronze bust I made of you, which was sent to Elba; also of my restoration of the beautiful marble Ganymede,¹ a task of extreme difficulty, in the completion of which I had more trouble than if I had done it all over again; likewise the casting of the Medusa, which your Excellency sees now before you—and a difficult casting it was, such as no other man had ever done before me in this devilish art. Look, my lord! I made that furnace over again on a different system from any other; for besides the new improvements and clever inventions to be seen in it, I made two issues for the bronze; otherwise this difficult, contorted figure could never have come out successfully. It is all due to my intelligence that it did not fail, and that I carried through what none of the masters of the art believed possible. Know also, my lord, that of a truth, with all the great and complicated works I did in France under that marvelous King Francis, I succeeded admirably; and this only because of the encouragement which the good King gave me by his handsome provision for my needs, and his grant of as many workmen as I asked for. Indeed, there were times when I employed more than forty, all chosen by myself. That was the reason I did so many fine things in so short a time. Now, my lord, have faith in me, and grant me the help I need; for I have good hopes of carrying through a work which will please you. On the other hand, if your Excellency breaks my spirit, and gives me

¹ Mentioned earlier in the autobiography.

none of the help I need, it is impossible for me, or any other man in the world, to do anything of worth."

It was all he could do to stay and listen to my arguments. Now he turned this way, and now the other; and as for me, poor miserable wight, I was in despair, recalling the great state that had been mine in France, and grieving sorely after it. Then he said, "Now tell me, Benvenuto, how is it possible that that fine head of Medusa, up there in the clutch of Perseus, should ever come out well?" Whereupon I answered, "Now, see, my lord! If you had the acquaintance with the art you profess to have, you would have no fear for the success of that fine head; but you might be anxious about this right foot, seeing it is down here, and somewhat far apart from the rest." At these words he turned, half in anger, to some gentlemen who were present, and said, "I believe Benvenuto contradicts my every word out of mere conceit." Then with a half-contemptuous smile, reflected on the faces of his courtiers, he addressed me, "I am willing to listen with patience to any convincing arguments you can possibly give me in support of your statement." To this I replied, "I will present so good an argument that your Excellency shall see with the utmost clearness how the thing is." And I began, "You must know, my lord, that it is in the nature of fire to ascend, and, therefore, I can be sure that this Medusa's head will succeed perfectly; on the other hand, as it is not in its nature to descend, and I have to force it down six cubits by an ingenious device, it must be evident to your Excellency that it is impossible for the foot to come out. But I can remodel it easily." "And why," returned the Duke, "did you not think of some contrivance by which the foot would come out as you say the head will?" "I should have had to make a much larger furnace," I answered, "with a conduit-pipe as thick as my leg; and all that weight of molten metal might then have run down far enough. My pipe, which is six

cubits long to the foot, as I have said, is no thicker than two fingers. But it was not worth while making a bigger one, for I shall touch up the defective parts later. But when the mould is more than half full, as I hope, from the middle upwards, the fire will mount according to its nature, and this head of Perseus and that of the Medusa will come out to perfection; and of this you may be assured." When I had stated all these sound arguments, and endless others besides, which it would take too long for me to write down, the Duke shook his head, and left me without a word.

By my own efforts I regained tranquillity of mind, and chased away those thoughts which every now and then would rise up before me, bringing bitter tears of regret to my eyes that ever I had left France. True, I had come to Florence, my dear fatherland, with the sole purpose of aiding my six nieces; but I saw this good deed had been the beginning of great ill for me. Yet all the same I looked forward to the time when, my Perseus finished, all my troubles should be turned to high delight and to glorious good.

And so I took heart again, and with all the resources of my body and my purse—though I had little enough money left—I set about procuring several loads of pine from the pine woods of Serristori, near Monte Lupo. While I was waiting for these, I covered my Perseus with the clay I had got ready several months before, in order that it might be well seasoned. When I had made its "tunic" of clay—for so is it called in our art—and had most carefully armed and girt it with iron, I began to draw off the wax by a slow fire through the various vent-holes I had made. (The more of these you have, the better will your moulds fill.) When this was done, I built up round the mould of my Perseus a funnel-shaped furnace of bricks, arranged one above the other, so as to leave numerous openings for the fire to breathe through. Then very gradually I laid the wood on, and kept up the fire for two days and

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two nights on end. After I had drawn off all the wax, and the mould had been properly baked, I set to work at once to dig a hole to sink the thing in, attending to all the strictest rules of the great art. This done, I raised the mould with the utmost care by means of windlasses and strong ropes to an upright position; and suspended it a cubit above the level of the furnace, paying attention that it hung exactly over the middle of the pit. Then gently, gently I let it down to the bottom of the furnace, sparing no pains to settle it securely there. This difficult job over, I set about propping it up with the earth I had dug out of the hole; and as I built up the earth, I made vent-holes, that is, little pipes of terra-cotta such as are used for drains and things of that kind. Then I saw that it was quite firm, and that this way of banking it up and putting conduits in their proper places was likely to be successful. It was evident also that my workmen understood my mode of working, which was very different from that of any of the other masters in my profession. Sure, therefore, that I could trust them, I gave my attention to the furnace, which I had filled up with pigs of copper and pieces of bronze, laid one on top of the other, according to the rules of the craft—that is, not pressing closely one on the other, but arranged so that the flames could make their way freely about them; for in this manner the metal is more quickly affected by the heat and liquefied. Then in great excitement I ordered them to light the furnace. They piled on the pine logs; and between the unctuous pine resin and the well-contrived draught of the furnace, the fire burned so splendidly that I had to feed it now on one side and now on the other. The effort was almost intolerable, yet I forced myself to keep it up.

On top of all this the shop took fire, and we feared lest the roof should fall upon us. Then, too, from the garden the rain and the wind blew in with such chill gusts as to cool the

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furnace. All this fighting for so many hours with adverse circumstances, forcing myself to a labor such as even my robust health could not stand, ended in a one-day fever of an indescribable severity. There was nothing for it but to fling myself on my bed, and I did so very ill-content. But first I appealed to my men—there were about ten or more helping me—master-founders, hand-laborers, peasants, and the workmen of my own shop. Among the last was Bernardino Mannellini of Mugello, who had been my pupil for several years. To him I said, after begging the good-will of all the rest, “My dear Bernardino, see that you attend to everything I have taught you; and make all the haste you can, for the metal will soon be ready. You cannot make a mistake; the good fellows here will hurry up with the channels, and with these two crooks you can surely draw back the plugs. Then I know for certain my mould will fill beautifully. I feel worse than I ever did since I came into the world; and I am sure I shall be dead in a few hours.” So, most ill-content, I left them and went to bed.

As soon as I was in bed I ordered my servant girls to take food and drink to all the men in the shop; and then I said to them, “By to-morrow morning I shall be dead.” They did their best to put heart into me, saying that my sickness would pass over, and that it only arose from over-fatigue. Thus for two hours I fought the fever; but it went on rising all the time, so that I never stopped wailing that I was about to die. Now the woman who looked after all my household was Mona Fiore da Castel del Rio; and a cleverer woman was never born, nor a more devoted. Though now she went on scolding me for losing heart, yet all the same she tended me as affectionately as possible. Nevertheless, for all her brave heart, she could not keep her tears from flowing as she saw me overcome by such terrible pain and depression. Yet she hid her weeping from me so far as she could. While I lay

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there in this terrible distress, I saw a man come into my room, whose body was twisted like a capital S; and he spoke in the sad and grievous tones of those who proclaim to doomed men that their last hour has tolled. "O Benvenuto!" he said, "your work is spoiled; and no power on earth can save it now." Hardly had I heard the miserable creature's words, than I set up such a terrible cry as might have been heard in the heaven of fire; and rising from my bed, I took my clothes and began to dress; and I dealt kicks and blows to the servant girls, the boy, and every one who came to help me, wailing the while, "Ah, traitors! jealous monsters! this is a malicious plot. But I swear by God that I shall come at the truth of it; and before I die I shall give such proof to the world of my strong hand as shall make more than one man stand in wonder!" When I had dressed, I hurried to the shop fuming with rage; and there I saw all the men I had left in the best of spirits standing dazed and at their wits' end. I broke into their stupor with, "Wake up! Listen to me! Since you've been either too great fools or too great knaves to do as I told you, attend to me now. I am here in front of my work. And not a word from any of you; for it's help, not advice, that will serve me now." On this up spoke Maestro Alessandro Lastricati, "Listen, Benvenuto! You are taking in hand a thing which defies the laws of art, and cannot be done, whatever means you try." At that I turned on him in such a fury, and with murder in my eye, that he and all the others too cried out, "Come on! Give your orders! We are ready for all you may command, while there is any breath left in our bodies." But I believe they uttered these soothing words only because they thought I was on the point of falling down dead. Then I hurried to the furnace, and found the metal had all coagulated, or, as we say, "caked." I ordered two laborers to go to Capretta the butcher's opposite, for a load of young oak logs, which had been dry for more than a year, and which

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Madonna Ginevra, Capretta's wife, had already offered me. As soon as I got the first armfuls, I set about filling the ash-pot below the furnace. Now oak of this kind makes a fiercer fire than any other sort of wood, and that is why alder or pine is used in the founding of gun-metal, for which the fire should be slow. Ah, then, you should have seen how the cake of metal began to run, and how it glowed! Meanwhile too, I forced it to flow along the channels, while I sent the rest of the men on the roof to look after the fire, which had broken out again more fiercely now the furnace was burning with such fury; and towards the garden side I made them pile up planks and rugs and old hangings to prevent the rain from pouring in.

When I had mastered all this confusion and trouble, I shouted now to this man, now to that, bidding them fetch and carry for me; and the solidified metal beginning to melt just then, the whole band were so excited to obedience, that each man did the work of three. Then I had them fetch half a pig of pewter, weighing about sixty pounds, and this I threw right in the middle of the solid metal in the furnace. And what with the wood I had put in beneath, and all the stirring with iron rods and bars, in a little while the mass grew liquid. When I saw I had raised the dead, in despite of all those ignorant skeptics, such vigor came back to me, that the remembrance of my fever and the fear of death passed away from me utterly. Then suddenly we heard a great noise, and saw a brilliant flash of fire, just as if a thunderbolt had rushed into being in our very midst. Every man of us was dazed by this prodigious and terrifying event, and I still more than the rest. Only when the great rumble and the flashing flame had passed, did we dare look each other in the face. Then I saw that the lid of the furnace had blown open so that the bronze was running over. In the same instant I had every mouth of the mould open and the plugs closed

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But perceiving that the metal did not run as freely as it should, I came to the conclusion that the intense heat had consumed the alloy. So I bade them fetch every pewter dish and porringer and plate I had in the house, nearly two hundred in all; and part of them I threw, one after another, into the channels, and put the rest into the furnace. Then they saw my bronze was really melted and filling up my mould, and gave me the readiest and most cheerful help and obedience. Now I was here; now I was there, giving orders or putting my own hand to the work, while I cried, "O God, who in Thy limitless strength didst rise from the dead, and glorious didst ascend to Heaven . . . !" In an instant my mould filled up; and I knelt down and thanked God with all my heart; then turned to a plate of salad lying on a bench there, and with splendid appetite ate and drank, and all my gang of men along with me. After that, as the day was but two hours off, I betook myself to bed, sound of body and in good heart; and, as if I had never known an ache in my life, sank gently to my rest. That good serving woman of mine, without my saying a word to her about it, had cooked a fine fat capon; and when I rose from my bed near dinner-time, she met me with a cheery face, and cried, "Oh, so this is the man who thought he was dying? I do believe that the blows and the kicks you gave us last night, when you were so furious that one would have said you were possessed of the devil, so scared that terrible fever that it ran away, lest it should be belabored too." Then all my poor family breathed once more after their fright and their formidable labors; and off they went to buy pots and pans of earthenware instead of the pewter vessels I had cast into the furnace. After which we sat down to dinner in the best of spirits; and in all my life I never remember eating with a gladder heart nor with a better appetite. After dinner all my helpers came to see me. They did nothing but congratulate each other,

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and thank God for the way things had turned out, and tell me they had seen things done which other masters held to be beyond anyone's powers. And I was proud, for I thought myself a very clever fellow—nor did I hide my opinion of myself; and putting my hand into my pocket, I paid every man to his full content.

But that scoundrel, my mortal enemy, Messer Pierfrancesco Ricci, the Duke's major-domo, ferreted out the whole story of the affair. And the two men whom I suspected of having caused the caking of my bronze told him I was no man; that of a surety I was a great demon, for I had done what by mere art could not be achieved. And all sorts of other prodigies they related of me, which would indeed have taxed a devil's powers. As they made the thing out to be much more astounding than it had been in reality, the major-domo wrote to the Duke, who was at Pisa, adding to their tale still more fearful and marvelous inventions of his own.

For two days I let my work cool, and then uncovered a little bit at a time. First of all I found that, thanks to the vents, the head of Medusa had come out splendidly—had I not told the Duke that it is in the nature of fire to ascend? Then I went on uncovering the rest, and found the other head, that of Perseus, was just as perfect; at which I wondered more; for, as you can see, it is much lower than that of Medusa. I had placed the mouths of the mould above the head and on the shoulders of the Perseus, and now I found that this head had taken all the remaining bronze in my furnace. Wonderful to relate, there was nothing left in the mouth of the channel, and yet there had been enough for my purpose. This appeared to me so marvelous—indeed, nothing short of a miracle—that the whole operation seemed as if it had been guided and brought to a happy end by Almighty God. Luck still followed me as I uncovered farther; every thing I found had come out successfully till I came to the right foot on

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which the figure rests. There I found the heel perfect, and on further examination evidently the whole foot as well. On the one hand I rejoiced; on the other I was half annoyed, but only because I had said to the Duke that it could not happen so. However, when all was disclosed, I found the toes and a little portion above them were wanting, so that about half the foot would have to be added. Though this would give me a little extra work, I was glad, nevertheless; for I could show the Duke that I understood my own business. A larger part of the foot, indeed, had come out than I looked for; but the reason was that, from various causes, the metal had been subjected to a greater heat than is ordained by the laws of the art; and then, too, I had thrown in extra alloy in the shape of my pewter household vessels, as I have told you—a thing nobody ever thought of doing before.

Now seeing the great success of my work, I set off at once for Pisa to see the Duke. He received me as kindly as possible, and so did the Duchess; and though their majordomo had told them the whole story, their Excellencies thought it still more prodigious and astounding when they heard it from my own lips. When I came to the foot of the Perseus, and related how, just as I had warned his Excellency before, it had not come out, I could see his wonder grow every moment, and he told the Duchess how, indeed, I had foretold this. Perceiving that my lord and my lady were in good humor with me, I begged the Duke to let me go to Rome. He consented with the greatest kindness, bidding me return ere long to finish his Perseus; and gave me letters of recommendation to his ambassador, Averardo Serristori. These were the first years of Pope Giulio de' Monti's reign.

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When the Duke heard that the whole of my Perseus was ready for exhibition, he came to see it one day; and it was very evident that he was much pleased. But turning

to some gentlemen who were with him, he said, "Though this seems a very fine thing to us, it has still to please the people. And so, Benvenuto my friend, before you give it the last touches, I should like you, just to please me, to uncover it towards the Piazza one midday, to see what they will say about it. For there is no doubt that when it is seen in the open, it will appear quite different from what it does now in this narrow space." I answered meekly, "My lord, I assure you it will look twice as well. Oh, does not your Excellency remember having seen it in the garden of my house? There, with abundant space about it, it made so fine an effect, that Bandinelli came through the garden of the Innocents to see it; and for all his sour and evil nature, he could not but speak well of it, though he had never spoken well of any man's work before in his life. I see your Excellency is too willing to be influenced by him." The Duke smiled not too agreeably at my words; yet he said quite good naturedly, "Do what I wish, my Benvenuto, just to give me some satisfaction."

Then he went off, and I gave orders to have the statue uncovered. But some gold was still wanting, likewise varnish here and there, and various other little things, before the whole could be called complete; and I began to murmur wrathfully, and lament and curse the evil day that led me back to Florence. For by this time I saw clearly the tremendous loss I had sustained by quitting France; nor did I see any prospect of benefit which would accrue to me from my lord in Florence; for from the beginning all along till now, whatever I had done for him had profited me less than nothing. So it was with a mind full of discontent that next day I uncovered my statue.

Now, as it pleased God, so soon as the people caught sight of it, there rose a great shout of applause, and this gave my heart some comfort. While I had been putting the finishing

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touches to the thing, people never stopped pinning up sonnets to the posts of the door, over which hung a curtain. I declare to you that one day, when it was open for several hours, more than twenty sonnets were stuck up, all of them couched in terms of the very highest praise. After I had covered it again, every day a great number of sonnets were pinned up, and Latin and Greek verses, too; for it was vacation time at the University of Pisa, and all the great distinguished doctors and scholars were each other's rivals in the matter. But what pleased me most, and gave me hope, too, of favor from the Duke, was that the artists, sculptors, and painters vied with each other as to who should say the finest thing about it. One of those whose praise I valued most was the able painter Jacopo da Pontormo. Still more did I set store on that of his pupil, the excellent painter Bronzino, who was not satisfied with sticking up several sonnets he had made, but sent them by his Sandrino to my house. So eloquently did they speak my praise, in that fine style which is a rare gift of his, that I did, indeed, draw some real consolation from them. Then I covered up the statue again, and set about completing it.

My Duke was well aware of the compliments which had been heaped on me by the distinguished artists of the Florentine school during the brief exhibition of my work. Nevertheless he said, "I am much pleased that Benvenuto should have had this little satisfaction. It will urge him to the desired end with more speed and diligence. But he need not think that when the whole of the statue is uncovered, and they can see all around it, the people will speak in this tone. For all its defects will then be pointed out to him—nay, more than there really are. So let him arm himself with patience." Now these words were but a repetition of what Bandinelli had said to the Duke; and he had adduced the example of certain works by Andrea del Verrocchio,

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who made those fine bronzes, the Christ and the Saint Thomas, which can be seen on the façade of Orsammichele; and other statues besides, even the admirable David of the divine Michael Angelo Buonarroti, which, he said, only looked well if seen from the front. Then he spoke of his own Hercules and Cacus, and the abusive sonnets which had been written on it; and went on to hurl insults at the people of Florence. The Duke, who was far too much influenced by him, had egged him on to say this, and felt confident that the thing would turn out as he said; for Bandinelli's heart was so full of envy that he never stopped from evil-speaking. And once when that hangman Bernardone, the broker, was present, he said to the Duke, by way of giving weight to Bandinelli's words, "My lord, you must know that to make great statues is a very different matter from making little figures. I don't mean to say he has not done these little trifles very cleverly; but you will see that in this larger work he will have no success." And so he went on concocting his calumnies, like the treacherous spy that he was, piling up a whole mountain of falsehood.

Now, as it pleased my glorious Lord, the immortal God, I brought the thing at last to its end; and one Thursday morning I showed it openly to the whole city. No sooner had I removed the screen, though the sun was barely risen, than a great multitude of people gathered round—it would be impossible to say how many—and all with one voice strove who should laud it highest. The Duke stood at one of the lower windows of the Palace, just above the door; and there, half hidden in the embrasure, he heard every word that was said about the statue. When he had stayed listening for several hours, he got up in the best of spirits, and turning to Messer Sforza, one of his gentlemen, he said, "Sforza, go and find Benvenuto, and tell him from me that he has satisfied me far more than I expected. Tell him also that I shall

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satisfy him in a way that will surprise him. And so let him be of good heart." And Messer Sforza came to me on his splendid errand, which gave me great comfort. That day was a very happy one for me, what with this good news from the Duke, and with the people pointing me out to this stranger and that, as some really marvelous and unheard-of wonder. Amongst those who were most complimentary to me were two gentlemen, ambassadors from the Viceroy of Sicily to our Duke on some affairs of state. These two most courteous men met me in the Piazza. I had been pointed out to them as I passed, and they were all eagerness to come at me. So now, cap in hand, they made me such a speech of ceremony that it would have more than satisfied a pope. I bowed as low as I could; but they so overwhelmed me with their politeness that I entreated them to be good enough to come out of the Piazza with me; for the people were stopping to look at me more than they did at my Perseus. In the midst of all their ceremonious speeches they had the face to propose I should go to Sicily, promising to make a most satisfactory bargain with me. They went on to tell me how Fra Giovan Agnolo de' Servi had made them a complete fountain, adorned with many figures; but that it had none of that excellence displayed in my Perseus, though, they added, they had made a rich man of him. They would have gone on at greater length; but I broke in, "I am very much astonished at your seeking to persuade me to leave the service of so great a lord. No prince was ever so great a lover of the arts as he. Besides, I am here in my native city, the school of all the higher arts. Oh, if I had craved for riches, I might have remained in France in the service of the great King Francis, who gave me a thousand gold crowns for my maintenance, in addition to paying for all the works I did for him, so that I made more than four thousand gold crowns a year. And I left in Paris the labors of four years." With these and other words of the

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kind, I made short work of their courtesies. Yet I thanked them for the great praise they had bestowed on me, than which no better reward can be given to the labors of an artist. They had, I said, so increased my desire to do well, that I hoped in a few years' time to be able to show another work, which I believed would give much more satisfaction to the noble Florentine school than the one they had seen. The two gentlemen would fain have picked up the thread of their ceremonious eloquence; but with a sweep of my cap and a low bow, I bade them adieu.

36 CONVERSATIONS OF SAMUEL JOHNSON¹

James Boswell

THIS is to me [James Boswell] a memorable year; for in 1763 it I had the happiness to obtain the acquaintance of that extraordinary man whose memoirs I am now writing; an acquaintance which I shall ever esteem as one of the most fortunate circumstances in my life. Though then but two-and-twenty, I had for several years read his works with delight and instruction, and had the highest reverence for their author, which had grown up in my fancy into a kind of mysterious veneration, by figuring to myself a state of solemn elevated abstraction, in which I supposed him to live in the immense metropolis of London. . . .

Mr. Thomas Davies the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russel Street, Covent Garden, told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him: but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife (who has been celebrated for her beauty), though upon the stage for many years, maintained an uniform decency of character; and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them as with any family which he used to visit. Mr. Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner, while relating them. He increased my impatience

¹ From *The Life of Samuel Johnson*. The passages selected are presented in their original order, and are dated by the marginal figures. The text is considerably modernized.

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and more to see the extraordinary man whose works highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back parlor, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us—he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his Dictionary, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation; which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from."—"From Scotland," cried Davies, roguishly. "Mr. Johnson," said I, "I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive

of what might come next. He then addressed himself to 1763
 Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused
 me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows
 the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three
 shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation
 with him, I ventured to say, "O, sir, I cannot think Mr.
 Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir," said he,
 with a stern look, "I have known David Garrick longer than
 you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me
 on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was
 rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any
 doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old
 acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified,
 and began to think, that the hope which I had long indulged
 of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had
 not my ardor been uncommonly strong, and my resolution
 uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have
 deterred me forever from making any further attempts. . . .

[By the time Boswell left Johnson on this occasion, his
 hope had been considerably revived.]

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if
 he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson
 at his chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might,
 and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So on
 Tuesday, the 24th of May, after having been enlivened by the
 witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton, Wilkes, Churchill, and
 Lloyd, with whom I had passed the morning, I boldly repaired
 to Johnson. His chambers were on the first floor of No. 1,
 Inner Temple Lane, and I entered them with an impression
 given me by the Reverend Dr. Blair, of Edinburgh, who had
 been introduced to him not long before, and described his
 having "found the giant in his den"; an expression which,
 when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I

1763 repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. . . .

He received me very courteously: but, it must be confessed, that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of clothes looked very rusty: he had on a little old shriveled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away, I also rose; but he said to me, "Nay, don't go."—"Sir," said I, "I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you." He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, "Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me." . . .

When I rose a second time, he again pressed me to stay, which I did. . . .

Before we parted, he was so good as to promise to favor me with his company one evening at my lodgings: and, as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add, that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

2 I described to him [Johnson] an impudent fellow from Scotland, who affected to be a savage, and railed at all established systems. JOHNSON: "There is nothing surprising in this, sir. He wants to make himself conspicuous. He would tumble in a hogsty, as long as you looked at him and called to him to come out. But let him alone, never mind him, and he'll soon give it over."

I added that the same person maintained that there was no

distinction between virtue and vice. JOHNSON: "Why, sir, 1763
if the fellow does not think as he speaks, he is lying; and I
see not what honor he can propose to himself from having
the character of a liar. But if he does really think that there
is no distinction between virtue and vice, why, sir, when he
leaves our houses let us count our spoons."

3 Rousseau's treatise on the inequality of mankind was at
this time a fashionable topic. It gave rise to an observation by
Mr. Dempster, that the advantages of fortune and rank were
nothing to a wise man, who ought to value only merit.
JOHNSON: "If man were a savage, living in the woods by
himself, this might be true; but in civilized society we all
depend upon each other, and our happiness is very much
owing to the good opinion of mankind. Now, sir, in civilized
society, external advantages make us more respected. A man
with a good coat upon his back meets with a better reception
than he who has a bad one. Sir, you may analyze this, and
say what is there in it? But that will avail you nothing, for it
is a part of a general system. Pound St. Paul's Church into
atoms, and consider any single atom; it is, to be sure, good
for nothing: but, put all these atoms together, and you have
St. Paul's Church. So it is with human felicity, which is made
up of many ingredients, each of which may be shown to be
very insignificant. In civilized society, personal merit will not
serve you so much as money will. Sir, you may make the ex-
periment. Go into the street, and give one man a lecture on
morality, and another a shilling, and see which will respect you
most. If you wish only to support nature, Sir William Petty
fixes your allowance at three pounds a year; but as times are
much altered, let us call it six pounds. This sum will fill
your belly, shelter you from the weather, and even get you a
strong lasting coat, supposing it to be made of good bull's hide.
Now, sir, all beyond this is artificial, and is desired in order

1763 to obtain a greater degree of respect from our fellow-creatures. And, sir, if six hundred pounds a year procure a man more consequence, and, of course, more happiness than six pounds a year, the same proportion will hold as to six thousand, and so on, as far as opulence can be carried. Perhaps he who has a large fortune may not be so happy as he who has a small one; but that must proceed from other causes than from his having the large fortune: for, *ceteris paribus*,¹ he who is rich in a civilized society, must be happier than he who is poor; as riches, if properly used (and it is a man's own fault if they are not), must be productive of the highest advantages. Money, to be sure, of itself is of no use; for its only use is to part with it. Rousseau, and all those who deal in paradoxes, are led away by a childish desire of novelty. When I was a boy, I used always to choose the wrong side of a debate, because most ingenious things, that is to say, most new things, could be said upon it. Sir, there is nothing for which you may not muster up more plausible arguments, than those which are urged against wealth and other external advantages. Why, now, there is stealing; why should it be thought a crime? When we consider by what unjust methods property has been often acquired, and that what was unjustly got it must be unjust to keep, where is the harm in one man's taking the property of another from him? Besides, sir, when we consider the bad use that many people make of their property, and how much better use the thief may make of it, it may be defended as a very allowable practice. Yet, sir, the experience of mankind has discovered stealing to be so very bad a thing, that they make no scruple to hang a man for it. When I was running about this town a very poor fellow, I was a great arguer for the advantages of poverty; but I was, at the same time, very sorry to be poor. Sir, all the arguments which are brought to represent poverty as no evil, show it to be evidently a great

¹ Other things being equal.

evil. You never find people laboring to convince you that you may live very happily upon a plentiful fortune.—So you hear people talking how miserable a king must be; and yet they all wish to be in his place.”

4 Of a gentleman who was mentioned, he [Johnson] said, “I have not met with any man for a long time who has given me such general displeasure. He is totally unfixed in his principles, and wants to puzzle other people.” I said his principles had been poisoned by a noted infidel writer, but that he was, nevertheless, a benevolent good man. JOHNSON: “We can have no dependence upon that instinctive, that constitutional goodness which is not founded upon principle. I grant you that such a man may be a very amiable member of society. I can conceive him placed in such a situation that he is not much tempted to deviate from what is right; and as every man prefers virtue, when there is not some strong incitement to transgress its precepts, I can conceive him doing nothing wrong. But if such a man stood in need of money, I should not like to trust him; and I should certainly not trust him with young ladies, for *there* is always temptation.”

5 [JOHNSON:] “Sir, I love the acquaintance of young people; because, in the first place, I don’t like to think myself growing old. In the next place, young acquaintances must last longest, if they do last; and then, sir, young men have more virtue than old men; they have more generous sentiments in every respect. I love the young dogs of this age, they have more wit and humor and knowledge of life than we had; but then the dogs are not so good scholars. Sir, in my early years I read very hard. It is a sad reflection but a true one, that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now. My judgment, to be sure, was not so good; but, I had all the facts. I remember very well, when I was at Oxford, an old gentleman said to

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1763 me, 'Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge; for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task.' "

6 [JOHNSON:] "Sir, there is one Mrs. Macaulay in this town, a great republican. One day when I was at her house, I put on a very grave countenance, and said to her, 'Madam, I am now become a convert to your way of thinking. I am convinced that all mankind are upon an equal footing; and to give you an unquestionable proof, madam, that I am in earnest, here is a very sensible, civil, well-behaved fellow-citizen, your footman; I desire that he may be allowed to sit down and dine with us.' I thus, sir, showed her the absurdity of the leveling doctrine. She has never liked me since. Sir, your levelers wish to level *down* as far as themselves; but they cannot bear leveling *up* to themselves."

7 On Saturday, July 30, Dr. Johnson and I took a sculler at the Temple Stairs, and set out for Greenwich. I asked him if he really thought a knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages an essential requisite to a good education. JOHNSON: "Most certainly, sir; for those who know them have a very great advantage over those who do not. Nay, sir, it is wonderful what a difference learning makes upon people even in the common intercourse of life, which does not appear to be much connected with it." "And yet," said I, "people go through the world very well, and carry on the business of life to good advantage, without learning." JOHNSON: "Why, sir, that may be true in cases where learning cannot possibly be of any use; for instance, this boy rows us as well without learning, as if he could sing the song of Orpheus to the Argonauts, who were the first sailors." He then called to the boy, "What would you give, my lad, to know about the Argonauts?" "Sir," said the boy, "I would give what I

have." Johnson was much pleased with his answer, and we 1763
gave him a double fare. Dr. Johnson then turning to me,
"Sir," said he, "a desire of knowledge is the natural feeling of
mankind; and every human being, whose mind is not de-
bauched, will be willing to give all that he has, to get
knowledge." . . .

We walked in the evening in Greenwich Park. He asked me,
I suppose, by way of trying my disposition, "Is not this very
fine?" Having no exquisite relish of the beauties of Nature,
and being more delighted with "the busy hum of men," I
answered, "Yes, sir; but not equal to Fleet Street." JOHNSON:
"You are right, sir."¹

I am aware that many of my readers may censure my want of
taste. Let me, however, shelter myself under the authority of
a very fashionable baronet in the brilliant world, who, on his
attention being called to the fragrance of a May evening in the
country, observed, "This may be very well; but for my part, I
prefer the smell of a flambeau at the play-house." . . .

Next day, Sunday, July 31, I told him [Johnson] I had
been that morning at a meeting of the people called Quakers,
where I had heard a woman preach. JOHNSON: "Sir, a woman's
preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not
done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

8 It was his [Johnson's] custom to observe certain days 1764
with a pious abstraction: *viz.*, New-year's day, the day of
his wife's death, Good Friday, Easter day, and his own birth-
day. He this year says: "I have now spent fifty-five years in
resolving: having, from the earliest time almost that I can
remember, been forming schemes of a better life. I have done
nothing. The need of doing, therefore, is pressing, since the
time of doing is short. O God, grant me to resolve aright,
and to keep my resolutions, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

¹ One is reminded of a famous letter of Charles Lamb's: see below,
p. 672.

1764

9 That the most minute singularities which belonged to him [Johnson], and made very observable parts of his appearance and manner, may not be omitted, it is requisite to mention, that while talking or even musing as he sat in his chair, he commonly held his head to one side towards his right shoulder, and shook it in a tremulous manner, moving his body backwards and forwards, and rubbing his left knee in the same direction, with the palm of his hand. In the intervals of articulating he made various sounds with his mouth; sometimes as if ruminating, or what is called chewing the cud, sometimes giving a half whistle, sometimes making his tongue play backwards from the roof of his mouth, as if clucking like a hen, and sometimes protruding it against his upper gums in front, as if pronouncing quickly under his breath, *too, too, too*: all this accompanied sometimes with a thoughtful look, but more frequently with a smile. Generally when he had concluded a period, in the course of a dispute, by which time he was a good deal exhausted by violence and vociferation, he used to blow out his breath like a whale. This I suppose was a relief to his lungs; and seemed in him to be a contemptuous mode of expression, as if he had made the arguments of his opponent fly like chaff before the wind.

1766

10 Talking of education, "People have nowadays," said he [Johnson], "got a strange opinion that everything should be taught by lectures. Now, I cannot see that lectures can do so much good as reading the books from which the lectures are taken. I know nothing that can be best taught by lectures, except where experiments are to be shown. You may teach chemistry by lectures:—you might teach making of shoes by lectures!"

11 I mentioned Hume's notion, that all who are happy are equally happy; a little miss with a new gown at a dancing-

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school ball, a general at the head of a victorious army, and an orator, after having made an eloquent speech in a great assembly. 1766
JOHNSON: "Sir, that all who are happy, are equally happy, is not true. A peasant and a philosopher may be equally *satisfied*, but not equally *happy*. Happiness consists in the multiplicity of agreeable consciousness. A peasant has not capacity for having equal happiness with a philosopher." I remember this very question very happily illustrated in opposition to Hume, by the Reverend Mr. Robert Brown, at Utrecht. "A small drinking-glass and a large one," said he, "may be equally full; but the large one holds more than the small."

Dr. Johnson was very kind this evening, and said to me, "You have now lived five-and-twenty years, and you have employed them well." "Alas, sir," said I, "I fear not. Do I know history? Do I know mathematics? Do I know law?" JOHNSON: "Why, sir, though you may know no science so well as to be able to teach it, and no profession so well as to be able to follow it, your general mass of knowledge of books and men renders you very capable to make yourself master of any science, or fit yourself for any profession."

12 [JOHNSON:] "So far is it from being true that men are naturally equal, that no two people can be half an hour together but one shall acquire an evident superiority over the other."

13 I asked him [Johnson] whether, as a moralist, he did not think that the practice of the law, in some degree, hurt the nice feeling of honesty. 1768
JOHNSON: "Why no, sir, if you act properly. You are not to deceive your clients with false representations of your opinion: you are not to tell lies to a judge." BOSWELL: "But what do you think of supporting a cause which you know to be bad?" JOHNSON: "Sir, you do

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1768 not know it to be good or bad till the judge determines it. I have said that you are to state facts fairly; so that your thinking, or what you call knowing, a cause to be bad, must be from reasoning, must be from your supposing your arguments to be weak and inconclusive. But, sir, that is not enough. An argument which does not convince yourself may convince the judge to whom you urge it; and if it does convince him, why, then, sir, you are wrong and he is right. It is his business to judge; and you are not to be confident in your own opinion that a cause is bad, but to say all you can for your client, and then hear the judge's opinion." BOSWELL: "But, sir, does not affecting a warmth when you have no warmth, and appearing to be clearly of one opinion, when you are in reality of another opinion, does not such dissimulation impair one's honesty? Is there not some danger that a lawyer may put on the same mask in common life, in the intercourse with his friends?" JOHNSON: "Why no, sir. Everybody knows you are paid for affecting warmth for your client; and it is, therefore, properly no dissimulation: the moment you come from the bar you resume your usual behavior. Sir, a man will no more carry the artifice of the bar into the common intercourse of society, than a man who is paid for tumbling upon his hands will continue to tumble upon his hands when he should walk on his feet."

1769 14 BOSWELL: "Is it wrong, . . . sir, to affect singularity, in order to make people stare?" JOHNSON: "Yes, if you do it by propagating error; and, indeed, it is wrong in any way. There is in human nature a general inclination to make people stare; and every wise man has himself to cure of it, and does cure himself. If you wish to make people stare by doing better than others, why make them stare till they stare their eyes out. But consider how easy it is to make people stare, by being absurd. I may do it by going into a drawing-room

without my shoes. You remember the gentleman in *The Spectator*, who had a commission of lunacy taken out against him for his extreme singularity, such as never wearing a wig, but a night-cap. Now, sir, abstractedly, the night-cap was best: but, relatively, the advantage was overbalanced by his making the boys run after him.” 1769

15 I mentioned to him [Johnson] that I had seen the execution of several convicts at Tyburn, two days before, and that none of them seemed to be under any concern. JOHNSON: “Most of them, sir, have never thought at all.” BOSWELL: “But is not the fear of death natural to man?” JOHNSON: “So much so, sir, that the whole of life is but keeping away the thoughts of it.”¹ He then, in a low and earnest tone, talked of his meditating upon the awful hour of his own dissolution, and in what manner he should conduct himself upon that occasion: “I know not,” said he, “whether I should wish to have a friend by me, or have it all between God and myself.”

Talking of our feeling for the distresses of others;—JOHNSON: “Why, sir, there is much noise made about it, but it is greatly exaggerated. No, sir, we have a certain degree of feeling to prompt us to do good; more than that, Providence does not intend. It would be misery to no purpose.” BOSWELL: “But suppose now, sir, that one of your intimate friends were apprehended for an offense for which he might be hanged.” JOHNSON: “I should do what I could to bail him, and give him any other assistance; but if he were once fairly hanged, I should not suffer.” BOSWELL: “Would you eat your dinner that day, sir?” JOHNSON: “Yes, sir; and eat it as if he were eating it with me. Why, there’s Baretta, who is to be tried for his life to-morrow; friends have risen up for him on every side; yet if he should be hanged, none of

¹ Compare Pascal, above, pp. 317ff.

1769 them will eat a slice of plum-pudding the less. Sir, that sympathetic feeling goes a very little way in depressing the mind."

I told him that I had dined lately at Foote's, who showed me a letter which he had received from Tom Davies, telling him that he had not been able to sleep from the concern he felt on account of "*this sad affair of Baretti*," begging of him to try if he could suggest anything that might be of service; and, at the same time, recommending to him an industrious young man who kept a pickle-shop. JOHNSON: "Ay, sir, here you have a specimen of human sympathy; a friend hanged, and a cucumber pickled. We know not whether Baretti or the pickle-man has kept Davies from sleep: nor does he know himself. And as to his not sleeping, sir; Tom Davies is a very great man; Tom has been upon the stage and knows how to do those things: I have not been upon the stage, and cannot do those things." BOSWELL: "I have often blamed myself, sir, for not feeling for others, as sensibly as many say they do." JOHNSON: "Sir, don't be duped by them any more. You will find these very feeling people are not very ready to do you good. They *pay* you by *feeling*."

16 Talking of trade, he [Johnson] observed: "It is a mistaken notion that a vast deal of money is brought into a nation by trade. It is not so. Commodities come from commodities; but trade produces no capital accession of wealth. However, though there should be little profit in money, there is a considerable profit in pleasure, as it gives to one nation the productions of another; as we have wines and fruits, and many other foreign articles, brought to us." BOSWELL: "Yes, sir, and there is a profit in pleasure, by its furnishing occupation to such numbers of mankind." JOHNSON: "Why, sir, you cannot call that [namely, occupation, labor] pleasure to which all are averse, and which none begin but with the hope

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of leaving off; a thing which men dislike before they have tried 1769
it, and when they have tried it." BOSWELL: "But, sir, the
mind must be employed, and we grow weary when idle."
JOHNSON: "That is, sir, because, others being busy, we want
company; but if we were all idle, there would be no growing
weary; we should all entertain one another.¹ There is, indeed,
this in trade:—it gives men an opportunity of improving their
situation. If there were no trade, many who are poor would
always remain poor. But no man loves labor for itself."
BOSWELL: "Yes, sir, I know a person who does. He is a very
laborious judge, and he loves the labor." JOHNSON: "Sir,
that is because he loves respect and distinction. Could he
have them without labor, he would like it less." BOSWELL:
"He tells me he likes it for itself."—"Why, sir, he fancies so,
because he is not accustomed to abstract."

17 To my question, whether we might not fortify our
minds for the approach of death, he [Johnson] answered, in
a passion, "No, sir, let it alone. It matters not how a man
dies, but how he lives. The act of dying is not of importance,
it lasts so short a time." He added (with an earnest look):
"A man knows it must be so, and submits. It will do him no
good to whine."

18 I mentioned a friend of mine who had resided long 1772
in Spain, and was unwilling to return to Britain. JOHNSON:
"Sir, he is attached to some woman." BOSWELL: "I rather
believe, sir, it is the fine climate which keeps him there."
JOHNSON: "Nay, sir, how can you talk so? What is *climate*
to happiness? Place me in the heart of Asia, should I not be
exiled? What proportion does climate bear to the complex
system of human life? You may advise me to live at Bologna

¹ This sentence, together with a part of the preceding, is used by
Stevenson as epigraph to *An Apology for Idlers*.

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1772 to eat sausages. The sausages there are the best in the world; they lose much by being carried.”¹

1773 19 At Mr. Thrale's . . . he [Johnson] repeated his usual paradoxical declamation against action in public speaking. “Action can have no effect upon reasonable minds. It may augment noise, but it never can enforce argument. If you speak to a dog, you use action; you hold up your hand thus, because he is a brute; and in proportion as men are removed from brutes, action will have the less influence upon them.” MRS. THRALE: “What then, sir, becomes of Demosthenes's saying? ‘Action, action, action!’” JOHNSON: “Demosthenes, madam, spoke to an assembly of brutes; to a barbarous people.”

20 The modes of living in different countries, and the various views with which men travel in quest of new scenes, having been talked of, a learned gentleman who holds a considerable office in the law expatiated on the happiness of a savage life, and mentioned an instance of an officer who had actually lived for some time in the wilds of America, of whom, when in that state, he quoted this reflection with an air of admiration, as if it had been deeply philosophical: “Here am I, free and unrestrained, amidst the rude magnificence of Nature, with this Indian woman by my side, and this gun, with which I can procure food when I want it: what more can be desired for human happiness?” It did not require much sagacity to foresee that such a sentiment would not be permitted to pass

¹ Elsewhere Boswell quotes from an essay of Johnson's: “Surely, nothing is more reproachful to a being endowed with reason, than to resign its powers to the influence of the air, and live in dependence on the weather and the wind for the only blessings which nature has put into our power, tranquillity and benevolence.—This distinction of seasons is produced only by imagination operating on luxury. To temperance every day is bright; and every hour is propitious to diligence. He that shall resolutely excite his faculties, or exert his virtues, will soon make himself superior to the seasons; and may set at defiance the morning mist and the evening damp, the blasts of the east, and the clouds of the south.”

without due animadversion. JOHNSON: "Do not allow yourself, sir, to be imposed upon by such gross absurdity. It is sad stuff; it is brutish. If a bull could speak, he might as well exclaim,—Here am I with this cow and this grass; what being can enjoy better felicity?" 1773

21 [At a dinner.] I introduced the subject of toleration. JOHNSON: "Every society has a right to preserve public peace and order, and therefore has a good right to prohibit the propagation of opinions which have a dangerous tendency: to say the *magistrate* has this right, is using an inadequate word: it is the *society* for which the magistrate is agent. He may be morally or theologically wrong in restraining the propagation of opinions which he thinks dangerous, but he is politically right." MAYO: "I am of opinion, sir, that every man is entitled to liberty of conscience in religion; and that the magistrate cannot restrain that right." JOHNSON: "Sir, I agree with you. Every man has a right to liberty of conscience, and with that the magistrate cannot interfere. People confound liberty of thinking with liberty of talking; nay, with liberty of preaching. Every man has a physical right to think as he pleases; for it cannot be discovered how he thinks. He has not a moral right, for he ought to inform himself, and think justly. But, sir, no member of a society has a right to *teach* any doctrine contrary to what the society holds to be true. The magistrate, I say, may be wrong in what he thinks; but while he thinks himself right, he may and ought to enforce what he thinks." MAYO: "Then, sir, we are to remain always in error, and truth never can prevail; and the magistrate was right in persecuting the first Christians." JOHNSON: "Sir, the only method by which religious truth can be established is by martyrdom. The magistrate has a right to enforce what he thinks; and he who is conscious of the truth has a right to suffer. I am afraid there is no other way of ascertaining

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1773 the truth, but by persecution on the one hand and enduring it on the other." GOLDSMITH: "But how is a man to act, sir? Though firmly convinced of the truth of his doctrine, may he not think it wrong to expose himself to persecution? Has he a right to do so? Is it not, as it were, committing voluntary suicide?" JOHNSON: "Sir, as to voluntary suicide, as you call it, there are twenty thousand men in an army who will go without scruple to be shot at, and mount a breach for fivepence a day." GOLDSMITH: "But have they a moral right to do this?" JOHNSON: "Nay, sir, if you will not take the universal opinion of mankind, I have nothing to say. If mankind cannot defend their own way of thinking, I cannot defend it. Sir, if a man is in doubt whether it would be better for him to expose himself to martyrdom or not, he should not do it. He must be convinced that he has a delegation from heaven." GOLDSMITH: "I would consider whether there is the greater chance of good or evil upon the whole. If I see a man who has fallen into a well, I would wish to help him out; but if there is a greater probability that he shall pull me in, than that I shall pull him out, I would not attempt it. So were I to go to Turkey, I might wish to convert the grand Signor to the Christian faith; but when I considered that I should probably be put to death without effectuating my purpose in any degree, I should keep myself quiet." JOHNSON: "Sir, you must consider that we have perfect and imperfect obligations. Perfect obligations, which are generally not to do something, are clear and positive; as, 'thou shalt not kill.' But charity, for instance, is not definable by limits. It is a duty to give to the poor; but no man can say how much another should give to the poor, or when a man has given too little to save his soul. In the same manner it is a duty to instruct the ignorant, and of consequence to convert infidels to Christianity; but no man in the common course of things is obliged to carry this to such a

degree as to incur the danger of martyrdom, as no man is obliged to strip himself to the shirt, in order to give charity. I have said, that a man must be persuaded that he has a particular delegation from heaven." GOLDSMITH: "How is this to be known? Our first reformers, who were burnt for not believing bread and wine to be Christ"—JOHNSON (interrupting him): "Sir, they were not burnt for not believing bread and wine to be Christ, but for insulting those who did believe it. And, sir, when the first reformers began, they did not intend to be martyred: as many of them ran away as could." BOSWELL: "But, sir, there was your countryman, Elwal, who you told me challenged King George with his blackguards and his redguards." JOHNSON: "My countryman, Elwal, sir, should have been put in the stocks: a proper pulpit for him; and he'd have had a numerous audience. A man who preaches in the stocks will always have hearers enough." BOSWELL: "But Elwal thought himself in the right." JOHNSON: "We are not providing for mad people; there are places for them in the neighborhood" (meaning Moorfields). MAYO: "But, sir, is it not very hard that I should not be allowed to teach my children what I really believe to be the truth?" JOHNSON: "Why, sir, you might contrive to teach your children *extra scandalum*;¹ but, sir, the magistrate, if he knows it, has a right to restrain you. Suppose you teach your children to be thieves?" MAYO: "This is making a joke of the subject." JOHNSON: "Nay, sir, take it thus:—that you teach them the community of goods; for which there are as many plausible arguments as for most erroneous doctrines. You teach them that all things at first were in common, and that no man had a right to anything but as he laid his hands upon it; and that this still is, or ought to be, the rule amongst mankind. Here, sir, you sap a great principle in society,—property. And don't you think the magistrate would have a

¹ Without causing scandal.

1773 right to prevent you? Or, suppose you should teach your children the notion of the Adamites, and they should run naked into the streets, would not the magistrate have a right to flog 'em into their doublets?" MAYO: "I think the magistrate has no right to interfere till there is some overt act." BOSWELL: "So, sir, though he sees an enemy to the State charging a blunderbuss, he is not to interfere till it is fired off!" MAYO: "He must be sure of its direction against the State." JOHNSON: "The magistrate is to judge of that.—He has no right to restrain your thinking, because the evil centers in yourself. If a man were sitting at this table, and chopping off his fingers, the magistrate, as guardian of the community, has no authority to restrain him, however he might do it from kindness as a parent.—Though, indeed, upon more consideration, I think he may; as it is probable, that he who is chopping off his own fingers may soon proceed to chop off those of other people. If I think it right to steal Mr. Dilly's plate, I am a bad man; but he can say nothing to me. If I make an open declaration that I think so, he will keep me out of his house. If I put forth my hand, I shall be sent to Newgate. This is the gradation of thinking, preaching, and acting: if a man thinks erroneously, he may keep his thoughts to himself, and nobody will trouble him; if he preaches erroneous doctrine, society may expel him; if he acts in consequence of it, the law takes place, and he is hanged." MAYO: "But, sir, ought not Christians to have liberty of conscience?" JOHNSON: "I have already told you so, sir. You are coming back to where you were." BOSWELL: "Dr. Mayo is always taking a return postchaise, and going the stage over again. He has it at half-price." JOHNSON: "Dr. Mayo, like other champions for unlimited toleration, has got a set of words. Sir, it is no matter, politically, whether the magistrate be right or wrong. Suppose a club were to be formed, to drink confusion to King George the Third, and a happy restoration to Charles

the Third; this would be very bad with respect to the State; 1773
 but every member of that club must either conform to its rules or be turned out of it. Old Baxter, I remember, maintains, that the magistrate should 'tolerate all things that are tolerable.' This is no good definition of toleration upon any principle; but it shows that he thought some things were not tolerable." TOPLADY: "Sir, you have untwisted this difficult subject with great dexterity."

During this argument, Goldsmith sat in restless agitation, from a wish to get in and *shine*. Finding himself excluded, he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for some time with it in his hand, like a gamester who, at the close of a long night, lingers for a little while, to see if he can have a favorable opening to finish with success. Once when he was beginning to speak, he found himself overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite end of the table, and did not perceive Goldsmith's attempt. Thus disappointed of his wish to obtain the attention of the company, Goldsmith in a passion threw down his hat, looking angrily at Johnson, and exclaimed in a bitter tone, "*Take it.*" When Toplady was going to speak, Johnson uttered some sound, which led Goldsmith to think that he was beginning again, and taking the words from Toplady. Upon which, he seized this opportunity of venting his own envy and spleen, under the pretext of supporting another person: "Sir," said he to Johnson, "the gentleman has heard you patiently for an hour: pray allow us now to hear him." JOHNSON (sternly): "Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman. I was only giving him a signal of my attention. Sir, you are impertinent." Goldsmith made no reply, but continued in the company for some time. . . .

[After the dinner, Johnson] and Mr. Langton and I went together to the Club, where we found Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, and some other members, and amongst them our

1773 friend Goldsmith, who sat silently brooding over Johnson's reprimand to him after dinner. Johnson perceived this, and said aside to some of us, "I'll make Goldsmith forgive me"; and then called to him in a loud voice, "Dr. Goldsmith,—something passed to-day where you and I dined; I ask your pardon." Goldsmith answered placidly, "It must be much from you, sir, that I take ill." And so at once the difference was over, and they were on as easy terms as ever, and Goldsmith rattled away as usual.

1775 22 Johnson treated Scotland no worse than he did even his best friends, whose characters he used to give as they appeared to him, both in light and shade. Some people, who had not exercised their minds sufficiently, condemned him for censuring his friends. But Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose philosophical penetration and justness of thinking were not less known to those who lived with him, than his genius in his art is admired by the world, explained his conduct thus: "He was fond of discrimination, which he could not show without pointing out the bad as well as the good in every character; and as his friends were those whose characters he knew best, they afforded him the best opportunity for showing the acuteness of his judgment."

23 Next morning [April 1] I won a small bet from Lady Diana Beauclerk, by asking him [Johnson] as to one of his particularities, which her ladyship laid I durst not do. It seems he had been frequently observed at the Club to put into his pocket the Seville oranges, after he had squeezed the juice of them into the drink which he made for himself. Beauclerk and Garrick talked of it to me, and seemed to think that he had a strange unwillingness to be discovered. We could not divine what he did with them; and this was the bold question to be put. I saw on his table the spoils of the

preceding night, some fresh peels nicely scraped and cut into pieces. "O, sir," said I, "I now partly see what you do with the squeezed oranges which you put into your pocket at the Club." JOHNSON: "I have a great love for them." BOSWELL: "And pray, sir, what do you do with them? You scrape them, it seems, very neatly, and what next?" JOHNSON: "Let them dry, sir." BOSWELL: "And what next?" JOHNSON: "Nay, sir, you shall know their fate no further." BOSWELL: "Then the world must be left in the dark. It must be said (assuming a mock solemnity) he scraped them and let them dry, but what he did with them next, he never could be prevailed upon to tell." JOHNSON: "Nay, sir, you should say it more emphatically:—he could not be prevailed upon, even by his dearest friends, to tell."

24 He [Johnson] was pleased to say, "If you come to settle here, we will have one day in the week on which we will meet by ourselves. That is the happiest conversation where there is no competition, no vanity, but a calm quiet interchange of sentiments."

25 He [Johnson] . . . took occasion to enlarge on the advantages of reading, and combated the idle superficial notion, that knowledge enough may be acquired in conversation. "The foundation," said he, "must be laid by reading. General principles must be had from books, which, however, must be brought to the test of real life. In conversation you never get a system. What is said upon a subject is to be gathered from a hundred people. The parts of a truth, which a man gets thus, are at such a distance from each other that he never attains to a full view."

26 Dr. Adams told us that in some of the colleges at 1776 Oxford, the fellows had excluded the students from social

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1776 intercourse with them in the common room. JOHNSON: "They are in the right, sir; there can be no real conversation, no fair exertion of mind amongst them, if the young men are by; for a man who has a character does not choose to stake it in their presence." BOSWELL: "But, sir, may there not be very good conversation without a contest for superiority?" JOHNSON: "No animated conversation, sir, for it cannot be but one or other will come off superior. I do not mean that the victor must have the better of the argument, for he may take the weak side; but his superiority of parts and knowledge will necessarily appear; and he to whom he thus shows himself superior is lessened in the eyes of the young men."

27 We dined at an excellent inn at Chapel House, where he [Johnson] expatiated on the felicity of England in its taverns and inns, and triumphed over the French for not having, in any perfection, the tavern life. "There is no private house," said he, "in which people can enjoy themselves so well as at a capital tavern. Let there be ever so great plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that everybody should be easy; in the nature of things it cannot be: there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests; the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him; and no man, but a very impudent dog, indeed, can as freely command what is in another man's house, as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern, there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome: and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give, the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do, who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No, sir; there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness

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is produced as by a good tavern or inn.”¹ He then repeated, 1776
with great emotion, Shenstone’s lines:

“Whoe’er has travell’d life’s dull round,
Where’er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.”

Johnson said, “Marriage is the best state for a man in general; and every man is a worse man, in proportion as he is unfit for the married state.”

28 BOSWELL: “Pray, sir, do you not suppose that there are fifty women in the world, with any one of whom a man may be as happy as with any one woman in particular?”

JOHNSON: “Ay, sir, fifty thousand.” BOSWELL: “Then, sir, you are not of opinion with some who imagine that certain men and certain women are made for each other; and that they cannot be happy if they miss their counterparts.” JOHNSON: “To be sure not, sir. I believe marriages would in general be as happy, and often more so, if they were all made by the Lord Chancellor, upon a due consideration of the characters and circumstances, without the parties having any choice in the matter.”

29 Dr. Johnson talked with approbation of one who had attained to the state of the philosophical wise man, that is,

¹ Sir John Hawkins has preserved very few *Memorabilia* of Johnson. There is, however, to be found in his bulky tome a very excellent one upon this subject. “In contradistinction to those, who, having a wife and children, prefer domestic enjoyments to those which a tavern affords, I have heard him assert, *that a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity*.—‘As soon,’ said he, ‘as I enter the door of a tavern, I experience an oblivion of care, and a freedom from solicitude: when I am seated, I find the master courteous, and the servants obsequious to my call; anxious to know and ready to supply my wants: wine there exhilarates my spirits, and prompts me to free conversation and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love: I dogmatize and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinion and sentiments I find delight.’ ” [Author’s note.]

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1776 to have no want of any thing. "Then, sir," said I, "the savage is a wise man." "Sir," said he, "I do not mean simply being without,—but not having a want." I maintained, against this proposition, that it was better to have fine clothes, for instance, than not to feel the want of them. JOHNSON: "No, sir; fine clothes are good only as they supply the want of other means of procuring respect. Was Charles the Twelfth, think you, less respected for his coarse blue coat and black stock? And you find the King of Prussia dresses plain, because the dignity of his character is sufficient." I here brought myself into a scrape, for I heedlessly said, "Would not *you*, sir, be the better for velvet embroidery?" JOHNSON: "Sir, you put an end to all argument when you introduce your opponent himself. Have you no better manners? There is *your want*."

30 He [Johnson] said, "It is commonly a weak man, who marries for love." We then talked of marrying women of fortune; and I mentioned a common remark, that a man may be, upon the whole, richer by marrying a woman with a very small portion, because a woman of fortune will be proportionally expensive; whereas a woman who brings none will be very moderate in expenses. JOHNSON: "Depend upon it, sir, this is not true. A woman of fortune being used to the handling of money, spends it judiciously: but a woman who gets the command of money for the first time upon her marriage, has such a gust in spending it, that she throws it away with great profusion."

He praised the ladies of the present age, insisting that they were more faithful to their husbands, and more virtuous in every respect, than in former times, because their understandings were better cultivated. It was an undoubted proof of his good sense and good disposition, that he was never querulous, never prone to inveigh against the present times, as is so common when superficial minds are on the fret.

31 On Wednesday, April 3, in the morning, I found him [Johnson] very busy putting his books in order, and as they were generally very old ones, clouds of dust were flying around him. He had on a pair of large gloves such as hedgers use. His present appearance put me in mind of my uncle, Dr. Boswell's description of him, "A robust genius, born to grapple with whole libraries." 1776

32 Mr. Murray praised the ancient philosophers for the candor and good humor with which those of different sects disputed with each other. JOHNSON: "Sir, they disputed with good humor because they were not in earnest as to religion. Had the ancients been serious in their belief, we should not have had their gods exhibited in the manner we find them represented in the poets. The people would not have suffered it. They disputed with good humor upon their fanciful theories, because they were not interested in the truth of them: when a man has nothing to lose, he may be in good humor with his opponent. Accordingly, you see in Lucian,¹ [that] the Epicurean, who argues only negatively, keeps his temper; the Stoic, who has something positive to preserve, grows angry. Being angry with one who controverts an opinion which you value is a necessary consequence of the uneasiness which you feel. Every man who attacks my belief, diminishes in some degree my confidence in it, and therefore makes me uneasy; and I am angry with him who makes me uneasy. Those only who believed in revelation have been angry at having their faith called in question; because they only had something upon which they could rest as matter of fact." MURRAY: "It seems to me that we are not angry at a man for controverting an opinion which we believe and value; we rather pity him." JOHNSON: "Why, sir, to be sure when

¹ A Greek writer of the second century A. D., known chiefly for his *Dialogues*.

1776 you wish a man to have that belief which you think is of infinite advantage, you wish well to him; but your primary consideration is your own quiet. If a madman were to come into this room with a stick in his hand, no doubt we should pity the state of his mind; but our primary consideration would be to take care of ourselves. We should knock him down first, and pity him afterwards. No, sir, every man will dispute with great good humor upon a subject in which he is not interested. I will dispute very calmly upon the probability of another man's son being hanged; but if a man zealously enforces the probability that my own son will be hanged, I shall certainly not be in a very good humor with him." I added this illustration, "If a man endeavors to convince me that my wife, whom I love very much, and in whom I place great confidence, is a disagreeable woman, and is even unfaithful to me, I shall be very angry, for he is putting me in fear of being unhappy." MURRAY: "But, sir, truth will always bear an examination." JOHNSON: "Yes, sir, but it is painful to be forced to defend it. Consider, sir, how should you like, though conscious of your innocence, to be tried before a jury for a capital crime, once a week."

33 I mentioned a new gaming-club, of which Mr. Beauclerk had given me an account, where the members played to a desperate extent. JOHNSON: "Depend upon it, sir, this is mere talk. *Who* is ruined by gaming? You will not find six instances in an age. There is a strange rout made about deep play: whereas you have many more people ruined by adventurous trade, and yet we do not hear such an outcry against it." THRALE: "There may be few people absolutely ruined by deep play; but very many are much hurt in their circumstances by it." JOHNSON: "Yes, sir, and so are very many by other kinds of expense." I had heard him talk once before in the same manner; and at Oxford he said, he wished he had

learned to play at cards. The truth, however, is, that he 1776
 loved to display his ingenuity in argument; and therefore
 would sometimes in conversation maintain opinions which he
 was sensible were wrong, but in supporting which, his reason-
 ing and wit would be most conspicuous. He would begin
 thus: "Why, sir, as to the good or evil of card-playing—" "Now," said Garrick, "he is thinking which side he shall
 take." He appeared to have a pleasure in contradiction,
 especially when any opinion whatever was delivered with an
 air of confidence; so that there was hardly any topic, if not
 one of the great truths of Religion and Morality, that he might
 not have been incited to argue, either for or against. Lord
 Elibank had the highest admiration of his powers. He once
 observed to me, "Whatever opinion Johnson maintains, I will
 not say that he convinces me; but he never fails to show me
 that he has good reasons for it."

34 He [Johnson] said, "A man who has not been in Italy,
 is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen
 what it is expected a man should see. The grand object of
 traveling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those
 shores were the four great empires of the world; the Assyrian,
 the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman.—All our religion,
 almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us
 above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediter-
 ranean."

35 A literary lady of large fortune was mentioned, as
 one who did good to many, but by no means "by stealth,"
 and instead of "blushing to find it fame," acted evidently
 from vanity. JOHNSON: "I have seen no beings who do as
 much good from benevolence, as she does from whatever
 motive. If there are such under the earth, or in the clouds,
 I wish they would come up, or come down. What Soame

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1776 Jenyns says upon this subject is not to be minded; he is a wit. No, sir; to act from pure benevolence is not possible for finite beings. Human benevolence is mingled with vanity, interest, or some other motive."

36 [JOHNSON:] "That man is never happy for the present is so true, that all his relief from unhappiness is only forgetting himself for a little while. Life is a progress from want to want, not from enjoyment to enjoyment."¹

37 [JOHNSON:] "Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his son, I think, might be made a very pretty book.² Take out the immorality, and it should be put in the hands of every young gentleman. An elegant manner and easiness of behavior are acquired gradually and imperceptibly. No man can say, 'I'll be genteel.' There are ten genteel women for one genteel man, because they are more restrained. A man without some degree of restraint is insufferable; but we are all less restrained than women. Were a woman sitting in company to put out her legs before her as most men do, we should be tempted to kick them in." No man was a more attentive and nice observer of behavior in those in whose company he happened to be, than Johnson; or however strange it may seem to many, had a higher estimation of its refinements. Lord Eliot informs me, that one day when Johnson and he were at dinner in a gentleman's house in London, upon Lord Chesterfield's Letters being mentioned, Johnson surprised the company by this sentence: "Every man of any education would rather be called a rascal than accused of deficiency in *the graces*."³ Mr. Gibbon, who

¹ Compare Pascal, above, pp. 316ff.

² One of these letters is reprinted below, p. 656.

³ "Other virtues are in request in the field and workyard, but a certain degree of taste is not to be spared in those we sit with. I could better eat with one who did not respect the truth or the laws, than with a sloven and unpresentable person. Moral qualities rule the world, but at short distances the senses are despotic."—Ralph Waldo Emerson.

was present, turned to a lady who knew Johnson well, and 1776
lived much with him, and in his quaint manner, tapping his
box, addressed her thus: "Don't you think, madam (looking
toward Johnson), that among *all* your acquaintances you could
find *one* exception?" The lady smiled, and seemed to
acquiesce.

38 The uncommon vivacity of General Oglethorpe's
mind, and variety of knowledge, having sometimes made
his conversation seem too desultory, Johnson observed,
"Oglethorpe, sir, never *completes* what he has to say."

He on the same account made a similar remark on Patrick
Lord Elibank: "Sir, there is nothing *conclusive* in his talk."

When I complained of having dined at a splendid table
without hearing one sentence of conversation worthy of being
remembered, he said, "Sir, there seldom is any such conver-
sation." BOSWELL: "Why then meet at table?" JOHNSON:
"Why to eat and drink together, and to promote kindness;
and, sir, this is better done when there is no solid conversation:
for when there is, people differ in opinion and get into bad
humor, or some of the company who are not capable of such
conversation, are left out, and feel themselves uneasy. . . ."

Being irritated by hearing a gentleman ask Mr. Levett a
variety of questions concerning him, when he was sitting by,
he broke out, "Sir, you have but two topics, yourself and me.
I am sick of both." "A man," said he, "should not talk of
himself, nor much of any particular person. He should take
care not to be made a proverb; and, therefore, should avoid
having any one topic of which people can say, 'We shall hear
him upon it.' . . ."

39 I am now to record a very curious incident in Dr.
Johnson's life, which fell under my own observation; of which

1776 *pars magna fui*,¹ and which I am persuaded will, with the liberal-minded, be much to his credit.

My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr. Samuel Johnson and to John Wilkes, Esq. Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out of all mankind.² They had even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings; yet I lived in habits of friendship with both. I could fully relish the excellence of each; for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chemistry, which can separate good qualities from evil in the same person.

Sir John Pringle, "mine own friend and my father's friend," between whom and Dr. Johnson I in vain wished to establish an acquaintance, as I respected and lived in intimacy with both of them, observed to me once, very ingeniously, "It is not in friendship as in mathematics, where two things, each equal to a third, are equal between themselves. You agree with Johnson as a middle quality, and you agree with me as a middle quality; but Johnson and I should not agree." Sir John was not sufficiently flexible; so I desisted; knowing, indeed, that the repulsion was equally strong on the part of Johnson; who, I know not from what cause, unless his being a Scotchman, had formed a very erroneous opinion of Sir John. But I conceived an irresistible wish, if possible, to bring Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes together. How to manage it, was a nice and difficult matter.

My worthy booksellers and friends, Messieurs Dilly in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men, than at any other, except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, had invited me to meet Mr. Wilkes and some more gentlemen, on Wednesday, May 15.

¹ Of which I was myself a great part.

² Judged by Johnson's standards and ideas, Wilkes in private life was a profligate, and in public life a seditious radical.

"Pray," said I, "let us have Dr. Johnson."—"What, with Mr. 1776 Wilkes? not for the world," said Mr. Edward Dilly; "Dr. Johnson would never forgive me."—"Come," said I, "if you'll let me negotiate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well." DILLY: "Nay, if you will take it upon you, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here."

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr. Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point. I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal, "Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, "Dine with Jack Wilkes, sir! I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch."¹ I therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus:—"Mr. Dilly, sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honor to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland." JOHNSON: "Sir, I am obliged to Mr. Dilly. I will wait upon him—" BOSWELL: "Provided, sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have is agreeable to you." JOHNSON: "What do you mean, sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world, as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?" BOSWELL: "I beg your pardon, sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotic friends with him." JOHNSON: "Well, sir, and what then? What care I for his *patriotic friends*? Poh!" BOSWELL: "I should not be surprised to find Jack Wilkes there." JOHNSON: "And if Jack Wilkes *should* be

¹ That is, with the hangman. Jack Ketch, a century earlier, was the public executioner.

1776 there, what is that to *me*, sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally." BOSWELL: "Pray, forgive me, sir: I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me." Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.

Upon the much expected Wednesday, I called on him about half an hour before dinner, as I often did when we were to dine out together, to see that he was ready in time, and to accompany him. I found him buffeting his books, as upon a former occasion, covered with dust, and making no preparation for going abroad. "How is this, sir?" said I. "Don't you recollect that you are to dine at Mr. Dilly's?" JOHNSON: "Sir, I did not think of going to Dilly's: it went out of my head. I have ordered dinner at home with Mrs. Williams."¹ BOSWELL: "But, my dear sir, you know you were engaged to Mr. Dilly, and I told him so. He will expect you, and will be much disappointed if you don't come." JOHNSON: "You must talk to Mrs. Williams about this."

Here was a sad dilemma. I feared that what I was so confident I had secured, would yet be frustrated. He had accustomed himself to show Mrs. Williams such a degree of humane attention, as frequently imposed some restraint upon him; and I knew that if she should be obstinate, he would not stir. I hastened down stairs to the blind lady's room, and told her I was in great uneasiness, for Dr. Johnson had engaged to me to dine this day at Mr. Dilly's, but that he had told me he had forgotten his engagement and had ordered dinner at home. "Yes, sir," said she, pretty peevishly, "Dr. Johnson is to dine at home." "Madam," said I, "his respect for you is such, that

¹ A woman who was much befriended by Johnson, and who during many years lived in his house.

I know he will not leave you, unless you absolutely desire it. But as you have so much of his company, I hope you will be good enough to forgo it for a day: as Mr. Dilly is a very worthy man, has frequently had agreeable parties at his house for Dr. Johnson, and will be vexed if the Doctor neglects him to-day. And then, madam, be pleased to consider my situation; I carried the message, and I assured Mr. Dilly that Dr. Johnson was to come; and no doubt he has made a dinner, and invited a company, and boasted of the honor he expected to have. I shall be quite disgraced if the Doctor is not there." She gradually softened to my solicitations, which were certainly as earnest as most entreaties to ladies upon any occasion, and was graciously pleased to empower me to tell Dr. Johnson, that all things considered, she thought he should certainly go. I flew back to him, still in dust, and careless of what should be the event, "indifferent in his choice to go or stay"; but as soon as I had announced to him Mrs. Williams's consent, he roared, "Frank, a clean shirt," and was very soon dressed. When I had him fairly seated in a hackney coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna Green.

When we entered Mr. Dilly's drawing-room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr. Dilly, "Who is that gentleman, sir?"—"Mr. Arthur Lee."—JOHNSON: "Too, too, too," under his breath, which was one of his habitual mutterings. Mr. Arthur Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a *patriot*, but an *American*.¹ He was afterwards minister from the United States at the court

¹ *Patriot* was at the time used "ironically"—according to Johnson himself—"for a factious disturber of the government." In the war with the American Colonies Johnson took the side of the English government.

1776 of Madrid. "And who is the gentleman in lace?"—"Mr. Wilkes, sir." This information confounded him still more; he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye upon it intently for some time, till he composed himself. His feelings, I dare say, were awkward enough. But he no doubt recollected his having rated me for supposing that he could be at all disconcerted by any company, and he, therefore, resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the world, who could adapt himself at once to the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet.

The cheering sound of "Dinner is upon the table," dissolved his reverie, and we *all* sat down without any symptom of ill-humor. There were present, besides Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Arthur Lee, who was an old companion of mine when he studied physic at Edinburgh, Mr. (now Sir John) Miller, Dr. Lettsom, and Mr. Slater, the druggist. Mr. Wilkes placed himself next to Dr. Johnson, and behaved to him with so much attention and politeness, that he gained upon him insensibly. No man eat more heartily than Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr. Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, sir;—It is better here—A little of the brown—Some fat, sir—A little of the stuffing—Some gravy—Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter—Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange;—or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest."—"Sir, sir, I am obliged to you, sir," cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of "surly virtue,"¹ but, in a short while, of complacency. . . . [The dinner went off without disturbance of this amiable mood, the Doctor and Wilkes, in spite of their differences, finding that they had a good deal in common.]

¹ A phrase from Johnson's *London, a Poem*.

Mr. Burke gave me much credit for this successful *negotia-* 1776
tion; and pleasantly said, "that there was nothing equal to it
 in the whole history of the *Corps Diplomatique*."

I attended Dr. Johnson home, and had the satisfaction to
 hear him tell Mrs. Williams how much he had been pleased
 with Mr. Wilkes's company, and what an agreeable day he had
 passed.

40 I complained of a wretched changefulness, so that I 1777
 could not preserve, for any long continuance, the same views
 of anything. It was most comfortable to me to experience in
 Dr. Johnson's company a relief from this uneasiness. His
 steady, vigorous mind held firm before me those objects which
 my own feeble and tremulous imagination frequently pre-
 sented in such a wavering state, that my reason could not judge
 well of them.

Dr. Johnson advised me . . . to have as many books
 about me as I could; that I might read upon any subject
 upon which I had a desire for instruction at the time. "What
 you read *then*," said he, "you will remember; but if you have
 not a book immediately ready, and the subject molds in your
 mind, it is a chance if you have again a desire to study it."
 He added, "If a man never has an eager desire for instruc-
 tion, he should prescribe a task for himself. But it is better
 when a man reads from immediate inclination."

41 [During a visit at Dr. Taylor's of Ashbourne. The
 "gentleman-farmer," another visitor at the same house, has
 once before appeared in the biography.] In the evening our
 gentleman-farmer, and two others, entertained themselves and
 the company with a great number of tunes on the fiddle.
 Johnson desired to have "Let ambition fire thy mind" played
 over again, and appeared to give a patient attention to it;
 though he owned to me that he was very insensible to the

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1777 power of music. I told him that it affected me to such a degree, as often to agitate my nerves painfully, producing in my mind alternate sensations of pathetic dejection, so that I was ready to shed tears; and of daring resolution, so that I was inclined to rush into the thickest part of the battle. "Sir," said he, "I should never hear it, if it made me such a fool."

This evening, while some of the tunes of ordinary composition were played with no great skill, my frame was agitated and I was conscious of a generous attachment to Dr. Johnson, as my preceptor and friend, mixed with an affectionate regret that he was an old man, whom I should probably lose in a short time. I thought I could defend him at the point of my sword. My reverence and affection for him were in full glow. I said to him, "My dear sir, we must meet every year, if you don't quarrel with me." JOHNSON: "Nay, sir, you are more likely to quarrel with me, than I with you. My regard for you is greater almost than I have words to express; but I do not choose to be always repeating it; write it down in the first leaf of your pocket-book, and never doubt of it again."

I talked to him of misery being "the doom of man," in this life, as displayed in his "Vanity of Human Wishes." Yet I observed that things were done upon the supposition of happiness; grand houses were built, fine gardens were made, splendid places of public amusement were contrived, and crowded with company. JOHNSON: "Alas, sir, these are all only struggles for happiness. When I first entered Ranelagh,¹ it gave an expansion and gay sensation to my mind such as I never experienced anywhere else. But, as Xerxes wept when he viewed his immense army, and considered that not one of that great multitude would be alive a hundred years afterwards, so it went to my heart to consider that there was not

¹ One of the "splendid places of public amusement" of eighteenth century England.

one in all that brilliant circle, that was not afraid to go home and think; but that the thoughts of each individual there, would be distressing when alone.”¹ 1777

42 Next morning, while we [the company at the house of Mrs. Thrale] were at breakfast, Johnson gave a very earnest recommendation of what he himself practiced with the utmost conscientiousness: I mean a strict attention to truth, even in the most minute particulars. “Accustom your children,” said he, “constantly to this; if a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them; you do not know where deviation from truth will end.” BOSWELL: “It may come to the door: and when once an account is at all varied in one circumstance, it may by degrees be varied so as to be totally different from what really happened.” Our lively hostess, whose fancy was impatient of the rein, fidgeted at this, and ventured to say: “Nay, this is too much. If Mr. Johnson should forbid me to drink tea, I would comply, as I should feel the restraint only twice a day; but little variations in narrative must happen a thousand times a day, if one is not perpetually watching.” JOHNSON: “Well, madam, and you *ought* to be perpetually watching. It is more from carelessness about truth than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world.” . . . 1778

He was indeed so much impressed with the prevalence of falsehood, voluntary or unintentional, that I never knew any person who upon hearing an extraordinary circumstance told, discovered more of the *incredulus odi*.² He would say with a significant look and decisive tone: “It is not so. Do not tell this again.” He inculcated upon all his friends the im-

¹ Compare Pascal, above, pp. 317ff.

² The last words of a line in Horace: here equivalent to “dislike of the incredible.”

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1778 portance of perpetual vigilance against the slightest degrees of falsehood; the effect of which, as Sir Joshua Reynolds observed to me, has been, that all who were of his *school* are distinguished for a love of truth and accuracy, which they would not have possessed in the same degree, if they had not been acquainted with Johnson.

43 Talking of drinking wine, he [Johnson] said: "I did not leave off wine because I could not bear it; I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it. University College has witnessed this." BOSWELL: "Why, then, sir, did you leave it off?" JOHNSON: "Why, sir, because it is so much better for a man to be sure that he is never to be intoxicated, never to lose the power over himself. I shall not begin to drink wine again till I grow old, and want it." BOSWELL: "I think, sir, you once said to me, that not to drink wine was a great deduction from life." JOHNSON: "It is a diminution of pleasure, to be sure; but I do not say a diminution of happiness. There is more happiness in being rational." BOSWELL: "But if we could have pleasure always, should not we be happy? The greatest part of men would compound for pleasure." JOHNSON: "Supposing we could have pleasure always, an intellectual man would not compound for it. The greatest part of men would compound, because the greatest part of men are gross." BOSWELL: "I allow there may be greater pleasure than from wine. I have had more pleasure from your conversation. I have indeed; I assure you I have." JOHNSON: "When we talk of pleasure, we mean sensual pleasure. . . . Philosophers tell you, that pleasure is *contrary* to happiness. Gross men prefer animal pleasure. So there are men who have preferred living among savages. Now what a wretch must he be, who is content with such conversation as can be had among savages! You may remember, an

officer at Fort Augustus, who had served in America, told us of a woman whom they were obliged to *bind*, in order to get her back from savage life." BOSWELL: "She must have been an animal, a beast." JOHNSON: "Sir, she was a speaking cat."

44 Sir John Pringle had expressed a wish that I would ask Dr. Johnson's opinion what were the best English sermons for style. I took an opportunity to-day of mentioning several to him. Atterbury? JOHNSON: "Yes, sir, one of the best." BOSWELL: "Tillotson?" JOHNSON: "Why, not now. I should not advise a preacher this day to imitate Tillotson's style; though I don't know; I should be cautious of objecting to what has been applauded by so many suffrages.—South is one of the best, if you except his peculiarities, and his violence, and sometimes coarseness of language.—Seed has a very fine style; but he is not very theological.—Jortin's sermons are very elegant.—Sherlock's style too is very elegant, though he has not made it his principal study.—And you may add Smallridge. All the latter preachers have a good style. Indeed, nobody now talks much of style: everybody composes pretty well. There are no such inharmonious periods as there were a hundred years ago. I should recommend Dr. Clarke's sermons, were he orthodox. However, it is very well known *where* he is not orthodox, which was upon the doctrine of the Trinity, as to which he is a condemned heretic; so one is aware of it." BOSWELL: "I like Ogden's Sermons on Prayer very much, both for neatness of style and subtilty of reasoning." JOHNSON: "I should like to read all that Ogden has written." BOSWELL: "What I wish to know is, what sermons afford the best specimens of English pulpit eloquence." JOHNSON: "We have no sermons addressed to the passions, that are good for anything; if you mean that kind of eloquence." A CLERGYMAN (whose name I do not recollect): "Were not Dodd's ser-

1778 mons addressed to the passions?" JOHNSON: "They were nothing, sir, be they addressed to what they may."¹

45 JOHNSON: "No wise man will go to live in the country unless he has something to do which can be better done in the country. For instance; if he is to shut himself up for a year to study a science, it is better to look out to the fields, than to an opposite wall. Then, if a man walks out in the country, there is nobody to keep him from walking in again; but if a man walks out in London, he is not sure when he shall walk in again. A great city is, to be sure, the school for studying life; and 'The proper study of mankind is man,' as Pope observes."²

46 His Lordship [the Bishop of St. Asaph] mentioned a charitable establishment in Wales where people were maintained, and supplied with everything, upon the condition of their contributing the weekly produce of their labor; and he said, they grew quite torpid for want of property. JOHNSON: "They have no object for hope. Their condition cannot be better. It is rowing without a port."

47 We talked of war. JOHNSON: "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or not having been at sea." BOSWELL: "Lord Mansfield does not." JOHNSON: "Sir, if Lord Mansfield were in a company of general officers and admirals who have been in service, he would

¹ Sympathy with the discomfited gentleman has happily inspired a contemporary essayist. See "A Clergyman," in the volume *And Even Now*, by Max Beerbohm.

² In a dialogue of Plato's, Phædrus says to Socrates (Jowett's translation): "I always wonder at you, Socrates; for when you are in the country, you really are like a stranger who is being led about by a guide. Do you ever cross the border? I rather think that you never venture even outside the gates." Socrates replies: "Very true, my good friend; and I hope that you will excuse me when you hear the reason, which is, that I am a lover of knowledge, and the men who dwell in the city are my teachers, and not the trees, or the country."

shrink; he'd wish to creep under the table." BOSWELL: "No; 1778
 he'd think he could *try* them all." JOHNSON: "Yes, if he
 could catch them: but they'd try him much sooner. No, sir:
 were Socrates and Charles the Twelfth of Sweden both pres-
 ent in any company, and Socrates to say, 'Follow me, and hear
 a lecture in philosophy'; and Charles, laying his hand on his
 sword, to say, 'Follow me, and dethrone the Czar'; a man
 would be ashamed to follow Socrates. Sir, the impression is
 universal: yet it is strange. As to the sailor, when you look
 down from the quarter-deck to the space below, you see the
 utmost extremity of human misery: such crowding, such filth,
 such stench!" BOSWELL: "Yet sailors are happy." JOHNSON:
 "They are happy as brutes are happy, with a piece of fresh
 meat,—with the grossest sensuality. But, sir, the profession
 of soldiers and sailors has the dignity of danger. Mankind
 reverence those who have got over fear, which is so general
 a weakness." SCOTT: "But is not courage mechanical, and to
 be acquired?" JOHNSON: "Why yes, sir, in a collective sense.
 Soldiers consider themselves only as part of a great machine."

48 He [Johnson] and I, and Mrs. Williams, went to dine
 with the Reverend Dr. Percy. Talking of Goldsmith, John-
 son said he was very envious. I defended him, by observing
 that he owned it frankly upon all occasions. JOHNSON: "Sir,
 you are enforcing the charge. He had so much envy, that he
 could not conceal it. He was so full of it, that he overflowed.
 He talked of it, to be sure, often enough. Now, sir, what a
 man avows, he is not ashamed to think; though many a man
 thinks what he is ashamed to avow. We are all envious
 naturally; but by checking envy, we get the better of it. So
 we are all thieves naturally; a child always tries to get at what
 it wants the nearest way; by good instruction and good habits
 this is cured, till a man has not even an inclination to seize
 what is another's; has no struggle with himself about it."

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And here I shall record a scene of too much heat between Dr. Johnson and Dr. Percy, which I should have suppressed were it not that it gave occasion to display the truly tender and benevolent heart of Johnson, who as soon as he found a friend was at all hurt by anything which he had "said in his wrath," was not only prompt and desirous to be reconciled, but exerted himself to make ample reparation.

Books of Travels having been mentioned, Johnson praised Pennant very highly, as he did at Dunvegan, in the Isle of Skye. Dr. Percy knowing himself to be the heir male of the ancient Percys, and having the warmest and most dutiful attachment to the noble House of Northumberland, could not sit quietly and hear a man praised, who had spoken disrespectfully of Alnwick-Castle and the Duke's pleasure-grounds, especially as he thought meanly of his travels. He therefore opposed Johnson eagerly. JOHNSON: "Pennant, in what he has said of Alnwick, has done what he intended; he has made you very angry." PERCY: "He has said the garden is trim which is representing it like a citizen's parterre, when the truth is, there is a very large extent of fine turf and gravel walks." JOHNSON: "According to your own account, sir, Pennant is right. It *is* trim. Here is grass cut close, and gravel rolled smooth. Is not that trim? The extent is nothing against that; a mile may be as trim as a square yard. Your extent puts me in mind of the citizen's enlarged dinner, two pieces of roast beef, and two puddings. There is no variety no mind exerted in laying out the ground, no trees." PERCY: "He pretends to give the natural history of Northumberland and yet takes no notice of the immense number of trees planted there of late." JOHNSON: "That, sir, has nothing to do with the *natural* history; that is *civil* history. A man who gives the natural history of the oak, is not to tell how many oaks have been planted in this place or that. A man who gives the natural history of the cow, is not to tell how many

cows are milked at Islington. The animal is the same, whether 1778

milked in the Park or at Islington." PERCY: "Pennant does

not describe well; a carrier who goes along the side of Loch

Lomond would describe it better." JOHNSON: "I think he de-

scribes very well." PERCY: "I traveled after him." JOHN-

SON: "And *I* traveled after him." PERCY: "But, my good

friend, you are short-sighted, and do not see so well as I do."

I wondered at Dr. Percy's venturing thus. Dr. Johnson said

nothing at the time: but inflammable particles were collecting

for a cloud to burst. In a little while Dr. Percy said some-

thing more in disparagement of Pennant. JOHNSON (point-

edly): "This is the resentment of a narrow mind, because he

did not find everything in Northumberland." PERCY (feeling

the stroke): "Sir, you may be as rude as you please." JOHN-

SON: "Hold, sir! don't talk of rudeness; remember, sir, you told

me" (puffing hard with passion struggling for a vent) "I was

short-sighted. We have done with civility. We are to be as

rude as we please." PERCY: "Upon my honor, sir, I did not

mean to be uncivil." JOHNSON: "I cannot say so, sir; for I *did*

mean to be uncivil, thinking *you* had been uncivil." Dr.

Percy rose, ran up to him, and taking him by the hand, assured

him affectionately that his meaning had been misunderstood;

upon which a reconciliation instantly took place. JOHNSON:

"My dear sir, I am willing you shall *hang* Pennant." PERCY

(resuming the former subject): "Pennant complains that the

helmet is not hung out to invite to the hall of hospitality.

Now I never heard that it was a custom to hang out a *helmet*."

JOHNSON: "Hang him up, hang him up." . . .

We had a calm after the storm, stayed the evening and

supped, and were pleasant and gay. But Dr. Percy told me

he was very uneasy at what had passed; for there was a gentle-

man there who was well acquainted with the Northumberland

family, to whom he hoped to have appeared more respectable,

by showing how intimate he was with Dr. Johnson, and who

1778 might now, on the contrary, go away with an opinion to his disadvantage. He begged I would mention this to Dr. Johnson, which I afterwards did. His observation upon it was: "This comes of *stratagem*; had he told me that he wished to appear to advantage before that gentleman, he should have been at the top of the house all the time." He spoke of Dr. Percy in the handsomest manner. "Then, sir," said I, "may I be allowed to suggest a mode by which you may effectually counteract any unfavorable report of what passed? I will write a letter to you upon the subject of the unlucky contest of that day, and you will be kind enough to put in writing as an answer to that letter, what you have now said, and as Lord Percy is to dine with us at General Paoli's soon, I will take an opportunity to read the correspondence in his Lordship's presence." This friendly scheme was accordingly carried into execution without Dr. Percy's knowledge. Johnson's letter placed Dr. Percy's unquestionable merit in the fairest point of view; and I contrived that Lord Percy should hear the correspondence, by introducing it at General Paoli's, as an instance of Dr. Johnson's kind disposition towards one in whom his Lordship was interested. Thus every unfavorable impression was obviated that could possibly have been made on those by whom he wished most to be regarded. I breakfasted the day after with him, and informed him of my scheme, and its happy completion, for which he thanked me in the warmest terms, and was highly delighted with Dr. Johnson's letter in his praise, of which I gave him a copy. He said, "I would rather have this than degrees from all the universities in Europe. It will be for me, and my children and grandchildren."

49 [BOSWELL, referring to a book on religion by Soame Jenyns:] "*You* should like his book, Mrs. Knowles [a Quakeress], as it maintains, as you *friends* do, that courage is

not a Christian virtue." MRS. KNOWLES: "Yes, indeed, I like him there; but I cannot agree with him, that friendship is not a Christian virtue." JOHNSON: "Why, madam, strictly speaking, he is right. All friendship is preferring the interest of a friend, to the neglect, or, perhaps, against the interests of others; so that an old Greek said, 'He that has *friends* has *no friend*.' Now Christianity recommends universal benevolence,—to consider all men as our brethren; which is contrary to the virtue of friendship, as described by the ancient philosophers. Surely, madam, your sect must approve of this; for, you call all men *friends*." MRS. KNOWLES: "We are commanded to do good to all men, 'but especially to them who are of the household of Faith.'" JOHNSON: "Well, madam. The household of Faith is wide enough." MRS. KNOWLES: "But, Doctor, our Savior had twelve Apostles, yet there was *one* whom he *loved*. John was called 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.'" JOHNSON (with eyes sparkling benignantly): "Very well, indeed, madam. You have said very well." BOSWELL: "A fine application. Pray, sir, had you ever thought of it?" JOHNSON: "I had not, sir." . . .

DR. MAYO (to Dr. Johnson): "Pray, sir, have you read Edwards, of New England, on Grace?" JOHNSON: "No, sir." BOSWELL: "It puzzled me so much as to the freedom of the human will, by stating, with wonderful acute ingenuity, our being actuated by a series of motives which we cannot resist, that the only relief I had was to forget it." MAYO: "But he makes the proper distinction between moral and physical necessity." BOSWELL: "Alas, sir, they come both to the same thing. You may be bound as hard by chains when covered by leather, as when the iron appears. The argument for the moral necessity of human actions is always, I observe, fortified by supposing universal prescience to be one of the attributes of the Deity." JOHNSON: "You are surer that you are free, than you are of prescience; you are surer

1778 that you can lift up your finger or not as you please, than you are of any conclusion from a deduction of reasoning. But let us consider a little the objection from prescience. It is certain I am either to go home to-night or not; that does not prevent my freedom." BOSWELL: "That it is certain you are *either* to go home or not, does not prevent your freedom: because the liberty of choice between the two is compatible with that certainty. But if *one* of these events be certain *now*, you have no *future* power of volition. If it be certain you are to go home to-night, you *must* go home." JOHNSON: "If I am well acquainted with a man, I can judge with great probability how he will act in any case, without his being restrained by my judging. God may have this probability increased to certainty." BOSWELL: "When it is increased to *certainly*, freedom ceases, because that cannot be *certainly* foreknown, which is not certain at the time; but if it be certain at the time, it is a contradiction in terms to maintain that there can be afterwards any *contingency* dependent upon the exercise of will or anything else." JOHNSON: "All theory is against the freedom of the will; all experience for it."—I did not push the subject any farther. I was glad to find him so mild in discussing a question of the most abstract nature, involved with theological tenets, which he generally would not suffer to be in any degree opposed.

50 I said to him [Johnson] that it was certainly true, as my friend Dempster had observed in his letter to me upon the subject, that a great part of what was in his "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland," had been in his mind before he left London. JOHNSON: "Why, yes, sir, the topics were; and books of travels will be good in proportion to what a man has previously in his mind; his knowing what to observe; his power of contrasting one mode of life with another. As the Spanish proverb says, 'He who would bring home the wealth

of the Indies, must carry the wealth of the Indies with him.' 1778
 So it is in traveling; a man must carry knowledge with him, if he would bring home knowledge." BOSWELL: "The proverb, I suppose, sir, means, he must carry a large stock with him to trade with." JOHNSON: "Yes, sir."

51 He [Johnson] observed, "A man cannot with propriety speak of himself, except he relates simple facts; as, 'I was at Richmond': or what depends on mensuration; as, 'I am six feet high.' He is sure he has been at Richmond; he is sure he is six feet high: but he cannot be sure he is wise, or that he has any other excellence. Then, all censure of a man's self is oblique praise. It is in order to show how much he can spare. It has all the invidiousness of self-praise, and all the reproach of falsehood."

52 An ingenious gentleman was mentioned, concerning whom both Robertson and Ramsay agreed that he had a constant firmness of mind; for after a laborious day, and amidst a multiplicity of cares and anxieties, he would sit down with his sisters and be quite cheerful and good-humored. Such a disposition, it was observed, was a happy gift of nature. JOHNSON: "I do not think so; a man has from nature a certain portion of mind; the use he makes of it depends upon his own free will. That a man has always the same firmness of mind, I do not say; because every man feels his mind less firm at one time than another; but I think, a man's being in a good or bad humor depends upon his will."—I, however, could not help thinking that a man's humor is often uncontrollable by his will.

53 JOHNSON: "Well, sir, Ramsay gave us a splendid dinner. I love Ramsay. You will not find a man in whose

1778 conversation there is more instruction, more information, and more elegance, than in Ramsay's." BOSWELL: "What I admire in Ramsay, is his continuing to be so young." JOHNSON: "Why, yes, sir; it is to be admired. I value myself upon this, that there is nothing of the old man in my conversation. I am now sixty-eight, and I have no more of it than at twenty-eight." BOSWELL: "But, sir, would not you wish to know old age? He who is never an old man, does not know the whole of human life; for old age is one of the divisions of it." JOHNSON: "Nay, sir, what talk is this?" BOSWELL: "I mean, sir, the Sphinx's description of it;—morning, noon, and night. I would know night, as well as morning and noon." JOHNSON: "What, sir, would you know what it is to feel the evils of old age? Would you have the gout? Would you have decrepitude?"

54 JOHNSON: "Mrs. Thrale's mother said of me what flattered me much. A clergyman was complaining of want of society in the country where he lived; and said, 'They talk of *runts*' (this is, young cows). 'Sir,' said Mrs. Salusbury, 'Mr. Johnson would learn to talk of runts;' meaning that I was a man who would make the most of my situation, whatever it was." He added, "I think myself a very polite man."

On Saturday, May 2, I dined with him at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where there was a very large company, and a great deal of conversation; but owing to some circumstances which I cannot now recollect, I have no record of any part of it, except that there were several people there by no means of the Johnsonian school; so that less attention was paid to him than usual, which put him out of humor; and upon some imaginary offense from me, he attacked me with such rudeness, that I was vexed and angry, because it gave those persons an opportunity of enlarging upon his supposed ferocity, and ill-treat-

ment of his best friends. I was so much hurt, and had my pride so much roused, that I kept away from him for a week, and perhaps, might have kept away much longer, nay, gone to Scotland without seeing him again, had not we fortunately met and been reconciled. To such unhappy chances are human friendships liable. 1778

On Friday, May 8, I dined with him at Mr. Langton's. I was reserved and silent, which I suppose he perceived, and might recollect the cause. After dinner, when Mr. Langton was called out of the room, and we were by ourselves, he drew his chair near to mine, and said in a tone of conciliating courtesy, "Well, how have you done?" BOSWELL: "Sir, you have made me very uneasy by your behavior to me, when we last were at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. You know, my dear sir, no man has a greater respect and affection for you, or would sooner go to the end of the world to serve you. Now to treat me so—" He insisted that I had interrupted him; which I assured him was not the case, and proceeded—"But why treat me so before people who neither love you nor me?" JOHNSON: "Well, I am sorry for it. I'll make it up to you twenty different ways, as you please." BOSWELL: "I said to-day to Sir Joshua, when he observed that you *tossed* me sometimes, 'I don't care how often, or how high he tosses me, when only friends are present, for then I fall upon soft ground: but I do not like falling on stones, which is the case when enemies are present.'—I think this a pretty good image, sir." JOHNSON: "Sir, it is one of the happiest I have ever heard."

55 [JOHNSON, concerning a book by Lord Kames:] "In this book it is maintained that virtue is natural to man, and, that if we would but consult our own hearts, we should be virtuous. Now after consulting our own hearts all we can, and with all the helps we have, we find how few of us are

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1778 virtuous. This is saying a thing which all mankind know not to be true." BOSWELL: "Is not modesty natural?" JOHNSON: "I cannot say, sir, as we find no people quite in a state of nature; but I think the more they are taught, the more modest they are. . . ."

1779 56 Talking of a friend of ours associating with persons of very discordant principles and characters, I said he was a very universal man, quite a man of the world. JOHNSON: "Yes, sir; but one may be so much a man of the world, as to be nothing in the world. I remember a passage in Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, which he was afterwards fool enough to expunge: 'I do not love a man who is zealous for nothing.'" BOSWELL: "That was a fine passage." JOHNSON: "Yes, sir: there was another fine passage, too, which he struck out: 'When I was a young man, being anxious to distinguish myself, I was perpetually starting new propositions. But I soon gave this over; for, I found that generally what was new was false.'" I said I did not like to sit with people of whom I had not a good opinion. JOHNSON: "But you must not indulge your delicacy too much; or you will be a *tête-à-tête* man all your life."

57 Of his fellow-collegian, the celebrated Mr. George Whitefield, he [Johnson] said, "Whitefield never drew as much attention as a mountebank does; he did not draw attention by doing better than others, but by doing what was strange. Were Astley to preach a sermon standing upon his head on a horse's back, he would collect a multitude to hear him; but no wise man would say he had made a better sermon for that. I never treated Whitefield's ministry with contempt; I believe he did good. He had devoted himself to the lower classes of mankind, and among them he was of use. But when familiarity and noise claim the praise due

to knowledge, art, and elegance, we must beat down such pretensions." 1779

58 [An observation which Boswell derived from Langton, a friend of Johnson's.] "When in good humor, he [Johnson] would talk of his own writings with a wonderful frankness and candor, and would even criticize them with the closest severity." One day, having read over one of his "Rambles," Mr. Langton asked him, how he liked that paper; he shook his head, and answered, "too wordy." At another time, when one was reading his tragedy of "Irene," to a company at a house in the country, he left the room: and somebody having asked him the reason of this, he replied, "Sir, I thought it had been better." 1780

59 [JOHNSON, as reported by Langton:] "No man speaks concerning another, even suppose it be in his praise, if he thinks he does not hear him, exactly as he would if he thought he was within hearing."

60 Mrs. Thrale gave high praise to Mr. Dudley Long (now North). JOHNSON: "Nay, my dear lady, don't talk so. Mr. Long's character is very *short*. It is nothing. He fills a chair. He is a man of genteel appearance, and that is all. I know nobody who blasts by praise as you do: for whenever there is exaggerated praise, everybody is set against a character. They are provoked to attack it. Now there is Pepys;¹ you praised that man with such disproportion, that I was incited to lessen him, perhaps more than he deserves. His blood is upon your head. By the same principle, your malice defeats itself; for your censure is too violent. And yet" (looking to her with a leering smile) "she is the first woman in the world, could she but restrain that wicked tongue of

¹ A contemporary; not the famous diarist.

1781 hers;—she would be the only woman, could she but command that little whirligig.”

Upon the subject of exaggerated praise I took the liberty to say, that I thought there might be very high praise given to a known character which deserved it, and therefore it would not be exaggerated. Thus, one might say of Mr. Edmund Burke, he is a very wonderful man. JOHNSON: “No, sir, you would not be safe, if another man had a mind perversely to contradict. He might answer: ‘Where is all the wonder? Burke is, to be sure, a man of uncommon abilities, with a great quantity of matter in his mind, and a great fluency of language in his mouth. But we are not to be stunned and astonished by him.’ So you see, sir, even Burke would suffer, not from any fault of his own, but from your folly.”

Mrs. Thrale mentioned a gentleman who had acquired a fortune of four thousand a year in trade, but was absolutely miserable because he could not talk in company; so miserable, that he was impelled to lament his situation in the street to —, whom he hates, and who he knows despises him. “I am a most unhappy man,” said he. “I am invited to conversations. I go to conversations; but, alas! I have no conversation.”—JOHNSON: “Man commonly cannot be successful in different ways. This gentleman has spent, in getting four thousand pounds a year, the time in which he might have learnt to talk; and now he cannot talk.”

61 Talking of a very respectable author, he [Johnson] told us a curious circumstance in his life, which was, that he had married a printer’s devil. REYNOLDS: “A printer’s devil, sir! Why, I thought a printer’s devil was a creature with a black face and in rags.” JOHNSON: “Yes, sir. But I suppose he had her face washed, and put clean clothes on her.” Then looking very serious, and very earnest: “And she did not disgrace him;—the woman had a bottom of good sense.”

The word *bottom* thus introduced, was so ludicrous when contrasted with his gravity, that most of us could not forbear tittering and laughing; though I recollect that the Bishop of Killaloe kept his countenance with perfect steadiness, while Miss Hannah More slyly hid her face behind a lady's back who sat on the same settee with her. His pride could not bear that any expression of his should excite ridicule, when he did not intend it; he therefore resolved to assume and exercise despotic power, glanced sternly around, and called out in a strong tone, "Where's the merriment?" Then collecting himself, and looking awful, to make us feel how he could impose restraint, and as it were searching his mind for a still more ludicrous word, he slowly pronounced, "I say the *woman* was *fundamentally* sensible"; as if he had said, hear this now, and laugh if you dare. We all sat composed as at a funeral.

62 [BOSWELL to Johnson:] "My dear sir, I would fain be a good man; and I am very good now. I fear God, and honor the King; I wish to do no ill, and to be benevolent to all mankind." He looked at me with a benignant indulgence; but took occasion to give me wise and salutary caution. "Do not, sir, accustom yourself to trust to *impressions*. There is a middle state of mind between conviction and hypocrisy, of which many are unconscious. By trusting to impressions, a man may gradually come to yield to them, and at length be subject to them, so as not to be a free agent, or what is the same thing in effect, to *suppose* that he is not a free agent. A man who is in that state, should not be suffered to live; if he declares he cannot help acting in a particular way, and is irresistibly impelled, there can be no confidence in him, no more than in a tiger. But, sir, no man believes himself to be impelled irresistibly; we know that he who says he believes it, lies. Favorable impressions at particular moments, as to the

1781 state of our souls, may be deceitful and dangerous. In general no man can be sure of his acceptance with God; some, indeed, may have had it revealed to them. St. Paul, who wrought miracles, may have had a miracle wrought on himself, and may have obtained supernatural assurance of pardon, and mercy, and beatitude; yet St. Paul, though he expresses strong hope, also expresses fear, lest having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway."

63 [Dictated by Johnson to Boswell.] "With respect to original sin, the inquiry is not necessary; for whatever is the cause of human corruption, men are evidently and confessedly so corrupt, that all the laws of heaven and earth are insufficient to restrain them from crimes. . . ."

64 [From one of Johnson's memorandum-books.] "August 9, 3 P. M. ætat. 72, in the summer-house at Streatham.

"After innumerable resolutions formed and neglected, I have retired hither, to plan a life of greater diligence, in hope that I may yet be useful, and be daily better prepared to appear before my Creator and my Judge, from whose infinite mercy I humbly call for assistance and support.

"My purpose is,

"To pass eight hours every day in some serious employment.

"Having prayed, I purpose to employ the next ~~six~~ weeks upon the Italian language, for my settled study."

1782 65 [Extracts from letters of Johnson to Boswell.] "Poverty, my dear friend, is so great an evil, and pregnant with so much temptation, and so much misery, that I cannot but earnestly enjoin you to avoid it. Live on what you have; live if you can on less; do not borrow either for vanity or pleasure; the vanity will end in shame, and the pleasure in regret: stay therefore at home, till you have saved money

for your journey hither.”—“Do not accustom yourself to consider debt only as an inconvenience; you will find it a calamity. Poverty takes away so many means of doing good, and produces so much inability to resist evil, both natural and moral, that it is by all virtuous means to be avoided. Consider a man whose fortune is very narrow; whatever be his rank by birth, or whatever his reputation by intellectual excellence, what can he do? or what evil can he prevent? That he cannot help the needy is evident; he has nothing to spare. But, perhaps, his advice or admonition may be useful. His poverty will destroy his influence: many more can find that he is poor, than that he is wise; and few will reverence the understanding that is of so little advantage to its owner. I say nothing of the personal wretchedness of a debtor, which, however, has passed into a proverb. Of riches it is not necessary to write the praise. Let it, however, be remembered, that he who has money to spare, has it always in his power to benefit others; and of such power a good man must always be desirous.”—“When the thoughts are extended to a future state, the present life seems hardly worthy of all those principles of conduct, and maxims of prudence, which one generation of men has transmitted to another; but upon a closer view, when it is perceived how much evil is produced, and how much good is impeded by embarrassment and distress, and how little room the expedients of poverty leave for the exercise of virtue, it grows manifest that the boundless importance of the next life enforces some attention to the interest of this.” 1782

66 [JOHNSON, as reported by Sir Joshua Reynolds:] 1783
 “A man should pass a part of his time with *the laughers*, by which means anything ridiculous or particular about him might be presented to his view, and corrected.”

1783 67 Johnson's dexterity in retort, when he seemed to be driven to an extremity by his adversary, was very remarkable. Of his power in this respect, our common friend, Mr. Windham, of Norfolk, has been pleased to furnish me with an eminent instance. However unfavorable to Scotland, he uniformly gave liberal praise to George Buchanan, as a writer. In a conversation concerning the literary merits of the two countries, in which Buchanan was introduced, a Scotchman, imagining that on this ground he should have an undoubted triumph over him, exclaimed, "Ah, Dr. Johnson, what would you have said of Buchanan, had he been an Englishman?"—"Why, sir," said Johnson, after a little pause, "I should *not* have said of Buchanan, had he been an *Englishman*, what I will now say of him as a *Scotchman*,—that he was the only man of genius his country ever produced."

68 Though his [Johnson's] usual phrase for conversation was *talk*, yet he made a distinction; for when he once told me that he dined the day before at a friend's house, with "a very pretty company," and I asked him if there was good conversation, he answered, "No, sir; we had *talk* enough, but no *conversation*; there was nothing *discussed*."

69 [An anecdote related by Maurice Morgann.] Mr. Morgann and he [Johnson] had a dispute pretty late at night, in which Johnson would not give up, though he had the wrong side; and in short, both kept the field. Next morning, when they met in the breakfasting-room, Dr. Johnson accosted Mr. Morgann thus: "Sir, I have been thinking on our dispute last night;—*you were in the right*."

70 JOHNSON: "Were I a country gentleman, I should not be very hospitable, I should not have crowds in my house." BOSWELL: "Sir Alexander Dick tells me, that he remembers

having a thousand people in a year to dine at his house; that is, reckoning each person as one, each time that he dined there." JOHNSON: "That, sir, is about three a day." BOSWELL: "How your statement lessens the idea." JOHNSON: "That, sir, is the good of counting. It brings everything to a certainty, which before floated in the mind indefinitely." BOSWELL: "But *Omne ignotum pro magnifico est*:¹ one is sorry to have this diminished." JOHNSON: "Sir, you should not allow yourself to be delighted with error."

71 BOSWELL: "I wish much to be in Parliament, sir." JOHNSON: "Why, sir, unless you come resolved to support any administration, you would be the worse for being in Parliament, because you would be obliged to live more expensively." —BOSWELL: "Perhaps, sir, I should be the less happy for being in Parliament. I never would sell my vote, and I should be vexed if things went wrong." JOHNSON: "That's cant, sir. It would not vex you more in the house than in the gallery: public affairs vex no man." BOSWELL: "Have not they vexed yourself a little, sir? Have not you been vexed by all the turbulence of this reign, and by that absurd vote of the House of Commons, 'That the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished?'" JOHNSON: "Sir, I have never slept an hour less, nor eat an ounce less meat. I would have knocked the factious dogs on the head, to be sure; but I was not *vexed*." BOSWELL: "I declare, sir, upon my honor, I did imagine I was vexed, and took a pride in it; but it *was*, perhaps, cant; for I own I neither eat less, nor slept less." JOHNSON: "My dear friend, clear your *mind* of cant. You may *talk* as other people do: you may say to a man, 'Sir, I am your most humble servant.' You are *not* his most humble servant. You may say, 'These are bad times; it is a melancholy thing to

¹ What we are ignorant of we regard as magnificent.

1783 be reserved to such times.' You don't mind the times. You tell a man, 'I am sorry you had such bad weather the last day of your journey, and were so much wet.' You don't care sixpence whether he is wet or dry. You may *talk* in this manner; it is a mode of talking in society: but don't *think* foolishly."

72 [Contributed to Boswell by a friend of Johnson's.] "A friend was one day, about two years before his [Johnson's] death, struck with some instance of Dr. Johnson's great candor. 'Well, sir,' said he, 'I will always say that you are a very candid man.'—'Will you?' replied the Doctor. 'I doubt then you will be very singular. But, indeed, sir,' continued he, 'I look upon myself to be a man very much misunderstood. I am not an uncandid, nor am I a severe man. I sometimes say more than I mean, in jest; and people are apt to believe me serious: however, I am more candid than I was when I was younger. As I know more of mankind, I expect less of them and am ready now to call a man a *good man*, upon easier terms than I was formerly.'"

73 Johnson . . . had thought more upon the subject of acting than might be generally supposed. Talking of it one day to Mr. Kemble, he said, "Are you, sir, one of those enthusiasts who believe yourself transformed into the very character you represent?" Upon Mr. Kemble's answering—that he had never felt so strong a persuasion himself: "To be sure not, sir," said Johnson; "the thing is impossible. And if Garrick really believed himself to be that monster, Richard the Third, he deserved to be hanged every time he performed it."

1784 74 BOSWELL: "Mr. Burke has a constant stream of conversation." JOHNSON: "Yes, sir; if a man were to go by

chance at the same time with Burke under a shed, to shun a shower, he would say—"this is an extraordinary man." If Burke should go into a stable to see his horse dressed, the hostler would say—"we have had an extraordinary man here." 1784

75 He [Johnson] . . . charged Mr. Langton with what he thought want of judgment, upon an interesting occasion. "When I was ill," said he, "I desired he would tell me sincerely in what he thought my life was faulty. Sir, he brought me a sheet of paper, on which he had written down several texts of Scripture, recommending Christian charity. And when I questioned him what occasion I had given for such an animadversion, all that he could say amounted to this,—that I sometimes contradicted people in conversation. Now what harm does it do to any man to be contradicted?" BOSWELL: "I suppose he meant the *manner* of doing it; roughly,—and harshly." JOHNSON: "And who is the worse for that?" BOSWELL: "It hurts people of weaker nerves." JOHNSON: "I know no such weak-nerved people." Mr. Burke, to whom I related this conference, said, "It is well, if when a man comes to die, he has nothing heavier upon his conscience than having been a little rough in conversation."

Johnson, at the time when the paper was presented to him, though at first pleased with the attention of his friend, whom he thanked in an earnest manner, soon exclaimed in a loud and angry tone, "What is your drift, sir?" Sir Joshua Reynolds pleasantly observed, that it was a scene for a comedy, to see a penitent get into a violent passion and belabor his confessor.

76 Dr. Johnson and I went in Dr. Adams's coach to dine with Mr. Nowell, Principal of St. Mary Hall, at his beautiful villa at Ifley, on the banks of the Isis, about two miles from

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1784 Oxford. While we were upon the road, I had the resolution to ask Johnson whether he thought that the roughness of his manner had been an advantage or not, and if he would not have done more good if he had been more gentle. I proceeded to answer myself thus: "Perhaps it has been of advantage, as it has given weight to what you said: you could not, perhaps, have talked with such authority without it." JOHNSON: "No, sir; I have done more good as I am. Obscenity and impiety have always been repressed in my company." BOSWELL: "True, sir; and that is more than can be said of every bishop. Greater liberties have been taken in the presence of a bishop, though a very good man, from his being milder, and therefore not commanding such awe. Yet, sir, many people who might have been benefited by your conversation, have been frightened away. A worthy friend of ours has told me, that he has often been afraid to talk to you." JOHNSON: "Sir, he need not have been afraid, if he had any thing rational to say. If he had not, it was better he did not talk."

77 [JOHNSON:] "Courage is a quality so necessary for maintaining virtue, that it is always respected, even when it is associated with vice."

78 We talked of a printed letter from the Reverend Herbert Croft to a young gentleman who had been his pupil, in which he advised him to read to the end of whatever books he should begin to read. JOHNSON: "This is surely a strange advice; you may as well resolve that whatever men you happen to get acquainted with, you are to keep to them for life. A book may be good for nothing; or there may be only one thing in it worth knowing; are we to read it all through?"

79 Sir Joshua Reynolds having said that he took the altitude of a man's taste by his stories and his wit, and of his understanding by the remarks which he repeated; being always sure that he must be a weak man, who quotes common things with an emphasis as if they were oracles;—Johnson agreed with him; and Sir Joshua having also observed that the real character of a man was found out by his amusements, —Johnson added, “Yes, sir; no man is a hypocrite in his pleasures.”

80 The difference, he [Johnson] observed, between a well-bred and an ill-bred man is this: “One immediately attracts your liking, the other your aversion. You love the one till you find reason to hate him; you hate the other till you find reason to love him.”

81 [Contributed to Boswell by a friend of Johnson's.] “It has been supposed that Dr. Johnson, so far as fashion was concerned, was careless of his appearance in public. But this is not altogether true, as the following slight instance may show:—Goldsmith's last comedy was to be represented during some court-mourning; and Mr. Steevens appointed to call on Dr. Johnson, and carry him to the tavern where he was to dine with others of the Poet's friends. The Doctor was ready dressed, but in colored clothes; yet being told that he would find everyone else in black, received the intelligence with a profusion of thanks, hastened to change his attire, all the while repeating his gratitude for the information that had saved him from an appearance so improper in the front row of a front box. ‘I would not,’ added he, ‘for ten pounds, have seemed so retrograde to any general observance.’”

82 He [Johnson] entered upon a curious discussion of the difference between intuition and sagacity; one being im-

1784 mediate in its effect, the other requiring a circuitous process; one he observed was the *eye* of the mind, the other the *nose* of the mind.

A young gentleman present took up the argument against him and maintained that no man ever thinks of the *nose of the mind*, not adverting that though that figurative sense seems strange to us, as very unusual, it is truly not more forced than Hamlet's "In my *mind's eye*, Horatio." He persisted much too long, and appeared to Johnson as putting himself forward as his antagonist with too much presumption: upon which he called to him in a loud tone, "What is it you are contending for if you *be* contending?"—And afterwards imagining that the gentleman retorted upon him with a kind of smart drollery, he said, "Mr. ———, it does not become you to talk so to me. Besides, ridicule is not your talent; you have *there* neither intuition nor sagacity."—The gentleman protested that he had intended no improper freedom, but had the greatest respect for Dr. Johnson. After a short pause, during which we were somewhat uneasy,—JOHNSON: "Give me your hand, sir. You were too tedious, and I was too short." Mr.——: "Sir, I am honored by your attention in any way." JOHNSON: "Come, sir, let's have no more of it. We offended one another by our contention; let us not offend the company by our compliments."

83 To Mr. Henry White, a young clergyman, with whom he [Johnson] now formed an intimacy, so as to talk to him with great freedom, he mentioned that he could not in general accuse himself of having been an undutiful son. "Once, indeed," said he, "I was disobedient; I refused to attend my father to Uttoxeter market. Pride was the source of that refusal, and the remembrance of it was painful. A few years ago I desired to atone for this fault. I went to Uttoxeter in very bad weather, and stood for a considerable

time bareheaded in the rain, on the spot where my father's stall used to stand. In contrition I stood, and I hope the penance was expiatory." 1784

84 [BOSWELL comments upon the death of Johnson, which occurred in 1784.] I trust, I shall not be accused of affectation, when I declare, that I find myself unable to express all that I felt upon the loss of such a "Guide, Philosopher, and Friend." I shall, therefore, not say one word of my own, but adopt those of an eminent friend, which he uttered with an abrupt felicity, superior to all studied compositions:—"He has made a chasm, which not only nothing can fill up, but which nothing has a tendency to fill up.—Johnson is dead.—Let us go to the next best:—there is nobody; no man can be said to put you in mind of Johnson."

Benjamin Franklin

IT was about this time² I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection. I wished to live without committing any fault at any time; I would conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not always do the one and avoid the other. But I soon found I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined. While my care was employed in guarding against one fault, I was often surprised by another; habit took the advantage of inattention; inclination was sometimes too strong for reason. I concluded, at length, that the mere speculative conviction that it was our interest to be completely virtuous was not sufficient to prevent our slipping; and that the contrary habits must be broken, and good ones acquired and established, before we can have any dependence on a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct. For this purpose I therefore contrived the following method.

In the various enumerations of the moral virtues I had met with in my reading, I found the catalogue more or less numerous, as different writers included more or fewer ideas under the same name. Temperance, for example, was by some confined to eating and drinking, while by others it was extended to mean the moderating every other pleasure, appetite, inclination, or passion, bodily or mental, even to our avarice and ambition. I proposed to myself, for the sake of clearness, to use rather more names, with fewer ideas annexed

¹ From the *Autobiography*.

² About 1731, when Franklin was twenty-five years of age.

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to each, than a few names with more ideas; and I included under thirteen names of virtues all that at that time occurred to me as necessary or desirable, and annexed to each a short precept, which fully expressed the extent I gave to its meaning.

These names of virtues, with their precepts were:—

I TEMPERANCE

Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

2 SILENCE

Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

3 ORDER

Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

4 RESOLUTION

Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

5 FRUGALITY

Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; *i.e.*, waste nothing.

6 INDUSTRY

Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

7 SINCERITY

Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly; and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

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8 JUSTICE

Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

9 MODERATION

Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

10 CLEANLINESS

Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation.

11 TRANQUILLITY

Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

12 CHASTITY

.

13 HUMILITY

Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

My intention being to acquire the *habitude* of all these virtues, I judged it would be well not to distract my attention by attempting the whole at once, but to fix it on one of them at a time; and, when I should be master of that, then to proceed to another, and so on, till I should have gone through the thirteen; and as the previous acquisition of some might facilitate the acquisition of certain others, I arranged them with that view, as they stand above. *Temperance* first, as it tends to procure that coolness and clearness of head, which is so necessary where constant vigilance was to be kept up.

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and guard maintained against the unremitting attraction of ancient habits, and the force of perpetual temptations. This being acquired and established, *Silence* would be more easy; and my desire being to gain knowledge at the same time that I improved in virtue, and considering that in conversation it was obtained rather by the use of the ears than of the tongue, and therefore wishing to break a habit I was getting into of prattling, punning, and joking, which only made me acceptable to trifling company, I gave *Silence* the second place. This and the next, *Order*, I expected would allow me more time for attending to my project and my studies. *Resolution*, once become habitual, would keep me firm in my endeavors to obtain all the subsequent virtues; *Frugality* and *Industry* freeing me from my remaining debt, and producing affluence and independence, would make more easy the practice of *Sincerity* and *Justice*, etc., etc. Conceiving then, that, agreeably to the advice of Pythagoras in his Golden Verses, daily examination would be necessary, I contrived the following method for conducting that examination.

I made a little book, in which I allotted a page for each of the virtues. I ruled each page with red ink, so as to have seven columns, one for each day of the week, marking each column with a letter for the day. I crossed these columns with thirteen red lines, marking the beginning of each line with the first letter of one of the virtues, on which line, and in its proper column, I might mark, by a little black spot, every fault I found upon examination to have been committed respecting that virtue upon that day.

I determined to give a week's strict attention to each of the virtues successively. Thus, in the first week, my great guard was to avoid every the least offense against *Temperance*, leaving the other virtues to their ordinary chance, only marking every evening the faults of the day. Thus, if in the first

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TEMPERANCE							
EAT NOT TO DULLNESS DRINK NOT TO ELEVATION							
	S.	M.	T.	W.	T.	F.	S.
T.							
S.	x	x		x		x	
O.	xx	x	x		x	x	x
R.			x			x	
F.		x			x		
I.			x				
S.							
J.							
M.							
C.							
T.							
C.							
H.							

week I could keep my first line, marked T, clear of spots, I supposed the habit of that virtue so much strengthened, and its opposite weakened, that I might venture extending my attention to include the next, and for the following week keep both lines clear of spots. Proceeding thus to the last, I could go through a course complete in thirteen weeks, and four courses in a year. And like him who, having a garden to weed, does not attempt to eradicate all the bad herbs at once, which would exceed his reach and his strength, but works on one of the beds at a time, and, having accomplished the first, proceeds to a second, so I should have, I hoped, the encouraging pleasure of seeing on my pages the progress I made in virtue, by clearing successively my lines of their spots, till in

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the end, by a number of courses, I should be happy in viewing a clean book, after a thirteen weeks' daily examination.

This my little book had for its motto these lines from Addison's *Cato*:—

"Here will I hold. If there's a power above us
(And that there is, all nature cries aloud
Through all her works), He must delight in virtue;
And that which He delights in must be happy."

Another from Cicero,

"O vitæ Philosophia dux! O virtutum indagatrix expul-
trixque vitiorum! Unus dies, bene et ex præceptis tuis actus,
peccanti immortalitati est anteponendus." ¹

Another from the Proverbs of Solomon, speaking of wisdom or virtue:—

"Length of days is in her right hand, and in her
left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways
of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."
iii. 16, 17.

And conceiving God to be the fountain of wisdom, I thought it right and necessary to solicit his assistance for obtaining it; to this end I formed the following little prayer, which was prefixed to my tables of examination, for daily use.

"O powerful Goodness! bountiful Father! merciful Guide! Increase in me that wisdom which discovers my truest interest. Strengthen my resolutions to perform what that wisdom dictates. Accept my kind offices to thy other children as the only return in my power for thy continual favors to me."

¹ "O Philosophy, guide of life! O inquirer after virtue and driver away of vice! One day lived well, and in accordance with thy precepts, is better than immortality consumed in wickedness."—"Philosophy, the guide of life!" is the motto of Phi Beta Kappa, the honorary society—the English words being a translation of the phrase represented by the three Greek letters.

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I used also sometimes a little prayer which I took from Thomson's poems, *viz.*:—

“Father of light and life, thou Good Supreme!
O teach me what is good; teach me Thyself!
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low pursuit; and fill my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure;
Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!”

The precept of *Order* requiring that *every part of my business should have its allotted time*, one page in my little book contained the following scheme of employment for the twenty-four hours of a natural day.

THE MORNING.		{	5	{	Rise, wash, and address			
Question. What shall I do this day?	good		6		{	Powerful Goodness! Con-		
						{	trive day's business, and	
							{	take the resolution of the
								{
	7	{	study, and breakfast.					
	8		{					
	9			{	Work.			
	10							
	11							
NOON.		{	12	{	Read, or overlook my ac-			
		{	1			{	counts, and dine.	
			2	{	Work.			
			3					
			4					
			5					
EVENING.		{	6	{	Put things in their places.			
Question. What good have I done to-day?			7		{	Supper. Music or diversion,		
			8			{	or conversation. Examina-	
			9				{	tion of the day.

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NIGHT.

$$\left. \begin{array}{c} 10 \\ 11 \\ 12 \\ 1 \\ 2 \\ 3 \\ 4 \end{array} \right\} \text{Sleep.}$$

I entered upon the execution of this plan for self-examination, and continued it with occasional intermissions for some time. I was surprised to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined; but I had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish. To avoid the trouble of renewing now and then my little book, which, by scraping out the marks on the paper of old faults to make room for new ones in a new course, became full of holes, I transferred my tables and precepts to the ivory leaves of a memorandum book, on which the lines were drawn with red ink, that made a durable stain, and on those lines I marked my faults with a black lead pencil, which marks I could easily wipe out with a wet sponge. After a while I went through one course only in a year, and afterwards only one in several years, till at length I omitted them entirely, being employed in voyages and business abroad, with a multiplicity of affairs that interfered; but I always carried my little book with me.

My scheme of *Order* gave me the most trouble; and I found that, though it might be practicable where a man's business was such as to leave him the disposition of his time, that of a journeyman printer, for instance, it was not possible to be exactly observed by a master, who must mix with the world, and often receive people of business at their own hours. *Order*, too, with regard to places for things, papers, etc., I found extremely difficult to acquire. I had not been early accustomed to it, and, having an exceeding good memory, I was not so sensible of the inconvenience attending want of

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method. This article, therefore, cost me so much painful attention, and my faults in it vexed me so much, and I made so little progress in amendment, and had such frequent relapses, that I was almost ready to give up the attempt, and content myself with a faulty character in that respect, like the man who, in buying an ax of a smith, my neighbor, desired to have the whole of its surface as bright as the edge. The smith consented to grind it bright for him if he would turn the wheel; he turned, while the smith pressed the broad face of the ax hard and heavily on the stone, which made the turning of it very fatiguing. The man came every now and then from the wheel to see how the work went on, and at length would take his ax as it was, without further grinding. "No," said the smith, "turn on, turn on; we shall have it bright by and by; as yet, it is only speckled." "Yes," says the man, "*but I think I like a speckled ax best.*" And I believe this may have been the case with many, who, having, for want of some such means as I employed, found the difficulty of obtaining good and breaking bad habits in other points of vice and virtue, have given up the struggle, and concluded that "*a speckled ax was best*"; for something, that pretended to be reason, was every now and then suggesting to me that such extreme nicety as I exacted of myself might be a kind of foppery in morals, which, if it were known, would make me ridiculous; that a perfect character might be attended with the inconvenience of being envied and hated; and that a benevolent man should allow a few faults in himself, to keep his friends in countenance.

In truth, I found myself incorrigible with respect to *Order* and now I am grown old, and my memory bad, I feel very sensibly the want of it. But, on the whole, though I never arrived at the perfection I had been so ambitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was, by the endeavor, better and a happier man than I otherwise should have been.

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if I had not attempted it; as those who aim at perfect writing by imitating the engraved copies, though they never reach the wished-for excellence of those copies, their hand is mended by the endeavor, and is tolerable while it continues fair and legible.

It may be well my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice, with the blessing of God, their ancestor owed the constant felicity of his life, down to his seventy-ninth year, in which this is written. What reverses may attend the remainder is in the hand of Providence; but, if they arrive, the reflection on past happiness enjoyed ought to help his bearing them with more resignation. To *Temperance* he ascribes his long-continued health, and what is still left to him of a good constitution; to *Industry* and *Frugality*, the early easiness of his circumstances and acquisition of his fortune, with all that knowledge that enabled him to be a useful citizen, and obtained for him some degree of reputation among the learned; to *Sincerity* and *Justice*, the confidence of his country and the honorable employs it conferred upon him; and to the joint influence of the whole mass of the virtues, even in the imperfect state he was able to acquire them, all that evenness of temper, and that cheerfulness in conversation, which makes his company still sought for, and agreeable even to his younger acquaintance. I hope, therefore, that some of my descendants may follow the example and reap the benefit.

38 EXTRACTS FROM A COLLEGE JOURNAL¹

Ralph Waldo Emerson

THE greatness of the philosopher [Socrates] shines forth in its fullest lustre when we examine the originality, the bold and unequalled sublimity of his conceptions. His powerful mind had surmounted the errors of education and had retained useful acquisitions, whilst it discarded what was absurd or unprofitable. He studied Nature with a chastised enthusiasm, and the constant activity of his mind endowed him with an energy of thought little short of inspiration. When he speaks of the immortality of the soul, or when he enters on considerations of the attributes or nature of the deity, he leaves the little quibblings of the sophists, and his own inferior strains of irony, and his soul warms and expands with his subject; we forget that he is man—he seems seated like Jupiter Creator molding magnificent forms and clothing them with beauty and grandeur.

2 Perhaps our system and all the planets, stars, we can discover, nay, the whole interminable Universe, is moving on, as has been supposed, in one grand circle round the center of light, and since the world began it has never completed a single revolution. It is an improvement on the grandeur of this supposition to suppose there is a source of light before us and the whole vast machinery has been forever and is now sweeping forward in a direct line through the interminable fields—extensions of space. It is a singular fact that we cannot present to the imagination a longer space than just so

¹ From the first volume of the *Journals*. Reprinted by permission of, and by special arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.—The passages selected were all written by Emerson when he was still very young—the first six when he was sixteen, the remainder when he was seventeen.

much of the world as is bounded by the visible horizon; so that, even in this stretching of thought to comprehend the broad path lengthening itself and widening to receive the rolling Universe, stern necessity bounds us to a little extent of a few miles only. But what matters it? we can talk and write and think it out. . . . Chateaubriand's "the universe is the imagination of the deity made manifest" is worthy him.

3 Let us suppose a pulpit orator to whom the path of his profession is yet untried, but whose talents are good and feelings strong, and his independence, as a man, in opinion and action is established; let him ascend the pulpit for the first time, not to please or displease the multitude, but to expound to them the words of the book and to waft their minds and devotions to heaven. Let him come to them in solemnity and strength, and when he speaks he will claim attention with an interesting figure and an interested face. To expand their views of the sublime doctrines of the religion, he may embrace the universe and bring down the stars from their courses to do homage to their Creator. Here is a fountain which cannot fail them. Wise Christian orators have often and profitably magnified the inconceivable power of the Creator as manifested in His works, and thus elevated and sobered the mind of the people and gradually drawn them off from the world they have left by the animating ideas of Majesty, Beauty, Wonder, which these considerations bestow. Then when life and its frivolities is fastly flowing away from before them, and the spirit is absorbed in the play of its mightiest energies, and their eyes are on him and their hearts are in heaven, then let him discharge his fearful duty, then let him unfold the stupendous designs of celestial wisdom, and whilst admiration is speechless, let him minister to their unearthly wants, and let the ambassador of the Most High prove himself worthy of his tremendous vocation. Let him gain the

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tremendous eloquence which stirs men's souls, which turns the world upside down, but which loses all its filth and retains all its grandeur when consecrated to God. When a congregation are assembled together to hear such an apostle, you may look round and you will see the faces of men bent forward in the earnestness of expectation, and in this desirable frame of mind the preacher may lead them whithersoever he will; they have yielded up their prejudices to the eloquence of the lips which the archangel hath purified and hallowed with fire, and this first sacrifice is the sin-offering which cleanseth them.

4 Mr. K., a lawyer of Boston, gave a fine character of a distinguished individual in private conversation, which in part I shall set down. "Webster is a rather large man, about five feet, seven, or nine, in height, and thirty-nine or forty years old—he has a long head, very large black eyes, bushy eyebrows, a commanding expression—and his hair is coal-black, and coarse as a crow's nest. His voice is sepulchral—there is not the least variety or the least harmony of tone—it commands, it fills, it echoes, but is harsh and discordant.—He possesses an admirable readiness, a fine memory, and a faculty of perfect abstraction, an unparalleled impudence and a tremendous power of concentration—he brings all that he has ever heard, read, or seen to bear on the case in question. He growls along the bar to see who will run, and if nobody runs he WILL fight. He knows his strength, has a perfect confidence in his own powers, and is distinguished by a spirit of fixed determination; he marks his path out, and will cut off fifty heads rather than turn out of it; but is generous and free from malice, and will never move a step to make a severe remark. His genius is such that, if he descends to be pathetic, he becomes ridiculous. He has no wit and never laughs though he is very shrewd and sarcastic, and sometimes sets the whole court in a roar by the singularity or pointedness of a

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remark. His imagination is what the light of a furnace is to its heat, a necessary attendant—nothing sparkling or agreeable, but dreadful and gloomy.”—This is the finest character I have ever heard portrayed, and very truly drawn, with little or no exaggeration.

5 Spring has returned and has begun to unfold her beautiful array, to throw herself on wild-flower couches, to walk abroad on the hills and summon her songsters to do her sweet homage. The Muses have issued from the library and costly winter dwelling of their votaries, and are gone up to build their bowers on Parnassus, and to melt their ice-bound fountains. Castalia is flowing rapturously and lifting her foam on high. The hunter and the shepherd are abroad on the rock and the valleys echo to the merry, merry horn. The Poet, of course, is wandering, while Nature's thousand melodies are warbling to him. This soft bewitching luxury of vernal gales and accompanying beauty overwhelms. It produces a lassitude which is full of mental enjoyment and which we would not exchange for more vigorous pleasure. Although so long as the spell endures, little or nothing is accomplished, nevertheless, I believe it operates to divest the mind of old and worn-out contemplations and bestows new freshness upon life, and leaves behind it imaginations of enchantment for the mind to mold into splendid forms and gorgeous fancies which shall long continue to fascinate, after the physical phenomena which woke them have ceased to create delight.

6 Judging from opportunity enjoyed, I ought to have this evening a flow of thought, rich, abundant, and deep; after having heard Mr. Everett deliver his Introductory Lecture,¹ in length one and one half hour, having read much and profit-

¹ As a professor at Harvard. This is the Everett mentioned in Lowell's article on Emerson, above, p. 171.

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ably in the *Quarterly Review*, and lastly having heard Dr. Warren's introductory lecture to anatomy,—all in the compass of a day—and the mind possessing a temperament well adapted to receive with calm attention what was offered. Shall endeavor to record promiscuously received ideas:—Though the literature of Greece gives us sufficient information with regard to later periods of their commonwealth, as we go back, before the light of tradition comes in, the veil drops. "All tends to the mysterious East." . . . From the time of the first dispersion of the human family to the time of Grecian rise, everything in the history of man is obscure, and we think ourselves sufficiently fortunate "if we can write in broad lines the fate of a dynasty," though we know nothing of the individuals who composed it. The cause is the inefficiency and uncertainty of tradition in those early and ignorant times when the whole history of a tribe was lodged in the head of its patriarch, and in his death their history was lost. But even after the invention of letters, much, very much, has never reached us. This we need not regret. What was worth knowing was transmitted to posterity, the rest buried in deserved forgetfulness. Everything was handed down which ought to be handed down. The Phœnicians gave the Greeks their *Alphabet*, yet not a line of all which they wrote has come down, while their pupils have built themselves an imperishable monument of fame.

7 Have been of late reading patches of Barrow and Ben Jonson; and what the object—not curiosity? no—nor expectation of edification intellectual or moral—but merely because they are authors where vigorous phrases and quaint, peculiar words and expressions may be sought and found, the better "to rattle out the battle of my thoughts." I shall now set myself to give a good sentence of Barrow's (the whole beauty of which he has impaired by a blundering collocation) in purer and more

fashionable English;—Obvious manifestations may be sometimes seen of the ruling government of God. Sometimes in the career of triumphant guilt when things have come to such a pass that iniquity and outrage do exceedingly prevail, so that the life of the offender becomes intolerably grievous, a change comes upon the state of things, however stable and enduring in appearance, a revolution in a manner sudden and strange, and flowing from causes mean and unworthy, which overturneth the towering fabric of fortune and reduces its gigantic dimensions; and no strugglings of might, no fetches of policy, no circum-spection or industry of man availing to uphold it: there is out-stretched an invisible hand checking all such force and crossing all such devices—a stone cut out of the mountain without hands and breaking to pieces the iron and the brass and the clay and [the] silver and the gold.—In looking over the sentence, however, though the grand outline of the whole was originally the Rev. Isaac Barrow's, yet we very self-complacently confess that great alterations have rendered it editorially Mr. Ralph Emerson's, and I intend to make use of it hereafter, after another new modeling, for it is still very susceptible of improvement.

8 When those magnificent masses of vapor which load our horizon are breaking away, disclosing fields of blue atmosphere, there is an exhilaration awakened in the system of a susceptible man which so invigorates the energies of mind, and displays to himself such manifold power and joy superior to other existences, that he will triumph and exult that he is a man. . . . We feel at these times that eternal analogy which subsists between the external changes of nature, and scenes of good and ill that chequer human life. Joy cometh, but is speedily supplanted by grief, and we look at the approach of transient verities like the mists of the morning, fearful and many, but the fairies are in them and *White Ladies*, beckoning.

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9 I have been reading the *Novum Organum*. Lord Bacon is indeed a wonderful writer; he condenses an unrivaled degree of matter in one paragraph. He never suffers himself "to swerve from the direct forthright," or to babble or speak unguardedly on his proper topic, and withal writes with more melody and rich cadence than any writer (I had almost said, of England) on a similar subject.

10 When we see an exquisite specimen of painting—whence does the pleasure we experience arise? From the *resemblance*, it is immediately answered, to the works of nature. It is granted that this is in part the cause, but it can't explain the whole pleasure we enjoy; for we see more perfect resemblances (as a stone apple or fruit) without this pleasure. No, it arises from the *power* which we immediately recollect to be necessary to the creation of the painting.

11 In the H[arvard] C[ollege] Athenæum I enjoyed a very pleasant hour reading the life of Marlborough in the *Quarterly Review*. I was a little troubled there by vexatious trains of thought; but once found myself stopping entirely from my reading and occupied in throwing guesses into futurity while I was asking myself if, when, ten or a dozen years hence, I am gone far on the bitter, perplexing roads of life, when I shall then recollect these moments, now thought so miserable, shall I not fervently wish the possibility of their return, and to find myself again thrown awkwardly on the tilted chair in the Athenæum study with my book in my hand; the snuffers and lamps and shelves around; and Motte coughing over his newspaper near me, and ready myself to saunter out into gayety and Commons when that variously-meaning *bell* shall lift up his *tongue*.

"Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus." ¹

¹ But meanwhile flies, flies irrecoverable time.

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12 Wordsworth's *Recluse*; *Quarterly Review*, September, 1819; Liber VIII, of Buchanan's *Scotland*—Wallace; Spenser's *View of the State of Ireland*; Camden's *Annals of Queen Elizabeth*; Kennet's *Life and Characters of Greek Poets*; Hody, *De Illustribus Græcis*; Middleton's *Cicero*; Burton's *Melancholy*; Barrow's *Sermons*; Hobbes' *Leviathan*; Joinville's *Life of St. Louis*; Froissart's *History of England*; Chaucer's *Works*; Bayle's *Dictionnaire*; *Corinne*; Massinger's *Plays*; Fletcher's *Plays*; Bentley's *Phalaris*; Peter's *Letters*; *Letters from Eastern States*; *Waverley*; Cogan *On the Passions*; Sir Charles Grandison.¹

13 *Exhibition night*. This tumultuous day is done. The character of its thought-weather is always extremely singular. Fuller than other days of great thoughts and poets' dreams, of hope and joy and pride, and then closed with merriment and wine, evincing or eliciting gay, fraternal feeling enough, but brutalized and defiled with excess of physical enjoyment; leaving the mind distracted and unfit for pursuits of soberness. Barnwell's Oration contained sublime images.—One was of great power—a terrible description of the fire-tempest which overshadowed Sodom and Gomorrah—another description of the waterspout of the Pacific was noble. A great struggle of ambition is going on between Barnwell and Upham. Thundering and lightning are faint and tame descriptions of the course of astonishing eloquence. You double the force of painting if you describe it as it is. The flashing eye, that fills up the chasms of language, the living brow, throwing meaning and intellect into every furrow and every frown; the stamping foot, the laboring limbs, the desperate gesture, these must all be seen in their strong exercise, before the vivid conception of their effect can be adequately felt. And then a man must separate and discipline and intoxicate his mind before he can enjoy the glory of the orator, when mighty thoughts come crowding on

¹ This paragraph appears under the heading *Books to be Sought*.

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the soul; he must learn to harrow up unwelcome recollections and concentrate woe and horror and disgust till his own heart sickens; he must stretch forth his arm and array the bright ideas which have settled around him till they gather to forceful and appalling sublimity.

14 I find myself often idle, vagrant, stupid, and hollow. This is somewhat appalling and, if I do not discipline myself with diligent care, I shall suffer severely from remorse and the sense of inferiority hereafter. All around me are industrious and will be great; I am indolent and shall be insignificant. Avert it, heaven! avert it, virtue! I need excitement.

15 What a grand man was Milton! so marked by nature for the great Epic Poet that was to bear up the name of these latter times. In "Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty," written while young, his spirit is already communing with itself and stretching out in its colossal proportions and yearning for the destiny he was appointed to fulfill.

16 It appears to me that it is a secret of the art of eloquence to know that a powerful aid would be derived from the use of forms of language which were generally known to men in their infancy, and which now, under another and unknown garb, but forcibly reminding them of early impressions, are likely to be mistaken for opinions whose beginning they cannot recollect, and therefore suppose them innate. At least, if by such operation they cannot convince the mind, they may serve to win attention by this awakening but ambiguous charm. By these forms of language I mean a paraphrase of some sentence in a *Primer* or other child's book common to the country. The spell would be more perfect, perhaps, if, instead of such a paraphrase, the words of a sentence should be modulated to the cadence of the aforesaid infant literature. I dare not subjoin an example.

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17 The human soul, the world, the universe are laboring on to their magnificent consummation. We are not fashioned thus marvelously for naught. The straining conceptions of man, the monuments of his reason, and the whole furniture of his faculties is [*sic*] adapted to mightier views of things than the mightiest he has yet beheld. Roll on, then, thou stupendous Universe, in sublime, incomprehensible solitude, in an unbeheld but sure path. The finger of God is pointing out your way. And when ages shall have elapsed and time is no more, while the stars shall fall from heaven and the Sun become darkness and the moon blood, human intellect, purified and sublimed, shall mount to perfection of unmeasured and ineffable enjoyment of knowledge and glory. Man shall come to the presence of Jehovah. (In the manner of Chateaubriand.)

18 The religion of my Aunt ¹ is the purest and most sublime of any I can conceive. It appears to be based on broad and deep and remote principles of expediency and adequateness to an end—principles which few can comprehend and fewer feel. It labors to reconcile the apparent insignificance of the field to the surpassing grandeur of the Operator, and founds the benignity and Mercy of the Scheme on adventurous but probable comparisons of the condition of other orders of being. Although it is an intellectual offspring of beauty and splendor, if that were all, it breathes a practical spirit of rigid and austere devotion. It is independent of forms and ceremonies, and its ethereal nature gives a glow of soul to her whole life. She is the Weird-woman of her religion, and conceives herself always bound to walk in narrow but exalted paths, which lead onward to interminable regions of rapturous and sublime glory.

¹ Mary Moody Emerson, a woman of ability who exercised an important influence upon the young Emerson.

Fanny Kemble

IT was in the autumn of 1829, my father being then absent on a professional tour in Ireland, that my mother, coming in from walking one day, threw herself into a chair and burst into tears. She had been evidently much depressed for some time past and I was alarmed at her distress, of which I begged her to tell me the cause. "Oh, it has come at last," she answered; "our property is to be sold. I have seen that fine building all covered with placards and bills of sale; the theater² must be closed, and I know not how many hundred poor people will be turned adrift without employment!" I believe the theater employed regularly seven hundred persons in all its different departments, without reckoning the great number of what were called supernumeraries, who were hired by the night at Christmas, Easter, and on all occasions of any specially showy spectacle. Seized with a sort of terror, like the Lady of Shalott, that "the curse had come upon me," I comforted my mother with expressions of pity and affection, and, as soon as I left her, wrote a most urgent entreaty to my father that he would allow me to act for myself, and seek employment as a governess, so as to relieve him at once at least of the burden of my maintenance. I brought this letter to my mother, and begged her permission to send it, to which she consented; but, as I afterward learned, she wrote by the same post to my father, requesting him not to give a positive answer to my letter until

¹ From *Records of a Girlhood*. Omissions are not noted.—Fanny Kemble belonged to a family of distinguished actors. She was the daughter of Charles Kemble, and the niece of John Kemble and of the famous Mrs. Siddons. At the time of her début she was twenty years old.

² Covent Garden, of which Fanny Kemble's father was the manager.

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his return to town. The next day she asked me whether I seriously thought I had any real talent for the stage. My school-day triumphs in Racine's *Andromaque* were far enough behind me, and I could only answer, with as much perplexity as good faith, that I had not the slightest idea whether I had or not. She begged me to learn some part and say it to her, that she might form some opinion of my power, and I chose Shakespeare's Portia, then, as now, my ideal of a perfect woman—the wise, witty woman, loving with all her soul and submitting with all her heart to a man whom everybody but herself (who was the best judge) would have judged her inferior; the laughter-loving, light-hearted, true-hearted, deep-hearted woman, full of keen perception, of active efficiency, of wisdom prompted by love, of tenderest unselfishness, of generous magnanimity; noble, simple, humble, pure; true, dutiful, religious, and full of fun; delightful above all others, the woman of women. Having learned it by heart, I recited Portia to my mother, whose only comment was, "There is hardly passion enough in this part to test any tragic power. I wish you would study Juliet for me." Study to me then, as unfortunately long afterward, simply meant to learn by heart, which I did again, and repeated my lesson to my mother, who again heard me without any observation whatever. Meantime my father returned to town and my letter remained unanswered, and I was wondering in my mind what reply I should receive to my urgent entreaty, when one morning my mother told me she wished me to recite Juliet to my father; and so in the evening I stood up before them both, and with indescribable trepidation repeated my first lesson in tragedy.

They neither of them said anything beyond "Very well,—very nice, my dear," with many kisses and caresses, from which I escaped to sit down on the stairs halfway between the drawing-room and my bedroom, and get rid of the repressed nervous fear I had struggled with while reciting, in floods of

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tears. A few days after this my father told me he wished to take me to the theater with him to try whether my voice was of sufficient strength to fill the building; so thither I went. That strange-looking place, the stage, with its racks of paste-board and canvas—streets, forests, banqueting-halls, and dungeons—drawn apart on either side, was empty and silent; not a soul was stirring in the indistinct recesses of its mysterious depths, which seemed to stretch indefinitely behind me. In front, the great amphitheater, equally empty and silent, wrapped in its gray holland covers, would have been absolutely dark but for a long, sharp, thin shaft of light that darted here and there from some height and distance far above me, and alighted in a sudden, vivid spot of brightness on the stage. Set down in the midst of twilight space, as it were, with only my father's voice coming to me from where he stood hardly distinguishable in the gloom, in those poetical utterances of pathetic passion I was seized with the spirit of the thing; my voice resounded through the great vault above and before me, and, completely carried away by the inspiration of the wonderful play, I acted Juliet as I do not believe I ever acted it again, for I had no visible Romeo, and no audience to thwart my imagination; at least, I had no consciousness of any, though in truth I had one. In the back of one of the private boxes, commanding the stage but perfectly invisible to me, sat an old and warmly attached friend of my father's, Major D——, a man of the world—of London society,—a passionate lover of the stage, an amateur actor of no mean merit, one of the members of the famous Cheltenham dramatic company, a first-rate critic in all things connected with art and literature, a refined and courtly, courteous gentleman; the best judge, in many respects, that my father could have selected, of my capacity for my profession and my chance of success in it. Not till after the event had justified my kind old friend's prophecy did I know that he had witnessed that morning's per-

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formance, and joining my father at the end of it had said, "Bring her out at once; it will be a great success." And so three weeks from that time I was brought out, and it was a "great success." Three weeks was not much time for preparation of any sort for such an experiment, but I had no more, to become acquainted with my fellow actors' and actresses, not one of whom I had ever spoken with or seen—off the stage—before; to learn all the technical *business*, as it is called, of the stage; how to carry myself toward the audience, which was not—but was to be—before me; how to concert my movements with the movements of those I was acting with, so as not to impede or intercept their efforts, while giving the greatest effect of which I was capable to my own.

I do not wonder, when I remember this brief apprenticeship to my profession, that Mr. Macready once said that I did not know the elements of it. Three weeks of morning rehearsals of the play at the theater, and evening consultations at home as to colors and forms of costume, what I should wear, how my hair should be dressed, etc., etc.,—in all which I remained absolutely passive in the hands of others, taking no part and not much interest in the matter,—ended in my mother's putting aside all suggestions of innovation like the adoption of the real picturesque costume of mediæval Verona (which was, of course, Juliet's proper dress), and determining in favor of the traditional stage costume for the part, which was simply a dress of plain white satin with a long train, with short sleeves and a low body; my hair was dressed in the fashion in which I usually wore it; a girdle of fine paste brilliants, and a small comb of the same, which held up my hair, were the only theatrical parts of the dress, which was as perfectly simple and as absolutely unlike anything Juliet ever wore as possible.

Poor Mrs. Jameson made infinite protests against this decision of my mother's, her fine artistic taste and sense of fitness being intolerably shocked by the violation of every pro-

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priety in a Juliet attired in a modern white satin ball dress amid scenery representing the streets and palaces of Verona in the fourteenth century, and all the other characters dressed with some reference to the supposed place and period of the tragedy. Visions too, no doubt, of sundry portraits of Raphael, Titian, Giorgione, Bronzino,—beautiful alike in color and fashion,—vexed her with suggestions, with which she plied my mother; who, however, determined as I have said, thinking the body more than raiment, and arguing that the unincumbered use of the person, and the natural grace of young arms, neck, and head, and unimpeded movement of the limbs (all which she thought more compatible with the simple white satin dress than the picturesque mediæval costume) were points of paramount importance. My mother, though undoubtedly very anxious that I should look well, was of course far more desirous that I should act well, and judged that whatever rendered my dress most entirely subservient to my acting, and least an object of preoccupation and strange embarrassment to myself, was, under the circumstances of my total inexperience and brief period of preparation, the thing to be chosen, and I am sure that in the main she judged wisely. The mere appendage of a train—three yards of white satin—following me wherever I went, was to me a new, and would have been a difficult experience to most girls. As it was, I never knew, after the first scene of the play, what became of my train, and was greatly amused when Lady Dacre told me, the next morning, that as soon as my troubles began I had snatched it up and carried it on my arm, which I did quite unconsciously, because I found something in the way of *Juliet's feet*.

I have often admired the consummate good sense with which, confronting a whole array of authorities, historical, artistic, æsthetical, my mother stoutly maintained in their despite that nothing was to be adopted on the stage that was

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in itself ugly, ungraceful, or even curiously antiquated and singular, however correct it might be with reference to the particular period, or even to authoritative portraits of individual characters of the play. The passions, sentiments, actions, and sufferings of human beings, she argued, were the main concern of a fine drama, not the clothes they wore. I think she even preferred an unobtrusive indifference to a pedantic accuracy, which, she said, few people appreciated, and which, if anything, rather took the attention from the acting than added to its effect, when it was really fine.

She always said, when pictures and engravings were consulted, "Remember, this presents but one view of the person, and does not change its position: how will this dress look when it walks, runs, rushes, kneels, sits down, falls, and turns its back?" I think an edge was added to my mother's keen, rational, and highly artistic sense of this matter of costume because it was the special hobby of her "favorite aversion," Mr. E——, who had studied with great zeal and industry antiquarian questions connected with the subject of stage representations, and was perpetually suggesting to my father improvements on the old ignorant careless system which prevailed under former managements.

It is very true that, as she said, Garrick acted Macbeth in a full court suit of scarlet,—knee-breeches, powdered wig, pig-tail, and all; and Mrs. Siddons acted the Grecian Daughter in piles of powdered curls, with a forest of feathers on the top of them, high-heeled shoes, and a portentous hoop; and both made the audience believe that they looked just as they should do. But for all that, actors and actresses who were neither Garrick nor Mrs. Siddons were not less like the parts they represented by being at least dressed as they should be; and the fine accuracy of the Shakespearean revivals of Mr. Macready and Charles Kean was in itself a great enjoyment; nobody was ever told to *omit* the tithing of mint and cummin,

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though other matters were more important; and Kean's Othello would have been the grand performance it was, even with the advantage of Mr. Fechter's clever and picturesque "getting up" of the play, as a frame to it; as Mademoiselle Rachel's wonderful fainting exclamation of, "*Oh, mon cher Curiace!*"¹ lost none of its poignant pathos, though she knew how every fold of her drapery fell and rested on the chair on which she sank in apparent unconsciousness. Criticizing a portrait of herself in that scene, she said to the painter, "*Ma robe ne fait pas ce pli-là; elle fait, au contraire, celui-ci.*"² The artist, inclined to defend his picture, asked her how, while she was lying with her eyes shut and feigning utter insensibility, she could possibly tell anything about the plaits of her dress. "*Allez-y voir,*"³ replied Rachel; and the next time she played Camille, the artist was able to convince himself by more careful observation that she was right, and that there was probably no moment of the piece at which this consummate artist was not aware of the effect produced by every line and fold of the exquisite costume, of which she had studied and prepared every detail as carefully as the wonderful movements of her graceful limbs, the intonations of her awful voice, and the changing expressions of her terribly beautiful countenance.

In late years, after I became the directress of my own stage costumes, I adopted one for Juliet, made after a beautiful design of my friend, Mrs. Jameson, which combined my mother's *sine qua non* of simplicity with a form and fashion in keeping with the supposed period of the play.

My frame of mind under the preparations that were going forward for my début appears to me now curious enough. Though I had found out that I could act, and had acted with a sort of frenzy of passion and entire

¹ "Oh, my dear Curiatius!"

² "My dress does not make that fold; on the contrary, it makes this."

³ "Go and see."

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self-forgetfulness the first time I ever uttered the wonderful conception I had undertaken to represent, my going on the stage was absolutely an act of duty and conformity to the will of my parents, strengthened by my own conviction that I was bound to help them by every means in my power. The theatrical profession was, however, utterly distasteful to me, though *acting* itself, that is to say, dramatic personation, was not; and every detail of my future vocation, from the preparations behind the scenes to the representations before the curtain, was more or less repugnant to me. Nor did custom ever render this aversion less; and liking my work so little, and being so devoid of enthusiasm, respect, or love for it, it is wonderful to me that I ever achieved *any* success in it at all. The dramatic element inherent in my organization must have been very powerful, to have enabled me, without either study of or love for my profession, to do anything worth anything in it.

But this is the reason why, with an unusual gift and many unusual advantages for it, I did really so little; why my performances were always uneven in themselves and perfectly unequal with each other, never complete as a whole, however striking in occasional parts, and never at the same level two nights together; depending for their effect upon the state of my nerves and spirits, instead of being the result of deliberate thought and consideration,—study, in short, carefully and conscientiously applied to my work; the permanent element which preserves the artist, however inevitably he must feel the influence of moods of mind and body, from ever being at their mercy.

I brought but one-half the necessary material to the exercise of my profession, that which nature gave me; and never added the cultivation and labor requisite to produce any fine performance in the right sense of the word; and, coming of

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a family of *real* artists, have never felt that I deserved that honorable name.

It was not an easy matter to find a Romeo for me, and in the emergency my father and mother even thought of my brother Henry's trying the part. He was in the first bloom of youth, and really might be called beautiful; and certainly, a few years later, might have been the very ideal of a Romeo. But he looked too young for the part, as indeed he was, being three years my junior. The overwhelming objection, however, was his own insuperable dislike to the idea of acting, and his ludicrous incapacity for assuming the faintest appearance of any sentiment. However, he learned the words, and never shall I forget the explosion of laughter which shook my father, my mother, and myself, when, after hearing him recite the balcony scene with the most indescribable mixture of shy terror and nervous convulsions of suppressed giggling, my father threw down the book, and Henry gave vent to his feelings by clapping his elbows against his sides and bursting into a series of triumphant cock-crows—an expression of mental relief so ludicrously in contrast with his sweet, sentimental face, and the part he had just been pretending to assume, that I thought we never should have recovered from the fits it sent us into. We were literally all crying with laughter, and a more farcical scene cannot be imagined. This, of course, ended all idea of that young chanticleer being my Romeo; and yet the young rascal was, or fancied he was, over head and ears in love at this very time, and an exquisite sketch Hayter had just made of him might with the utmost propriety have been sent to the exhibition with no other title than "Portrait of a Lover."

The part of Romeo was given to Mr. Abbot, an old-established favorite with the public, a very amiable and worthy man, old enough to have been my father, whose performance, not certainly of the highest order, was nevertheless not below inoffensive mediocrity. But the public who were bent upon

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doing more than justice to me, were less than just to him; and the abuse showered upon his Romeo, especially by my more enthusiastic admirers of the male sex, might, I should think, have embittered his stage relations with me to the point of making me an object of detestation to him, all through our theatrical lives. A tragi-comic incident was related to me by one of the parties concerned in it, which certainly proved that poor Mr. Abbot was quite aware of the little favor his Romeo found with my particular friends. One of them, the son of our kind and valued friends the G——s, an excellent, good-hearted, but not very wise young fellow, invariably occupied a certain favorite and favorable position in the midst of the third row of the pit every night that I acted. There were no stalls or reserved seats then, though not long after I came out the majority of the seats in the orchestra were let to spectators, and generally occupied by a set of young gentlemen whom Sir Thomas Lawrence always designated as my “body guard.” This, however, had not yet been instituted, and my friend G—— had often to wait long hours, and even to fight for the privilege of his peculiar seat, where he rendered himself, I am sorry to say, not a little ludicrous, and not seldom rather obnoxious to everybody in his vicinity, by the vehement demonstrations of his enthusiasm—his frantic cries of “bravo,” his furious applause, and his irrepressible exclamations of ecstasy and agony during the whole play. He became as familiar to the public as the stage lamps themselves, and some of his immediate neighbors complained rather bitterly of the incessant din and clatter of his approbation, and the bruises, thumps, contusions, and constant fears which his lively sentiments inflicted upon them. This *fanatico*¹ of mine, walking home from the theater one night with two other like-minded individuals, indulged himself in obstreperous abuse of poor Mr. Abbot, in which he was heartily joined by

¹ Mad lover.

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his companions. Toward Cavendish Square the broad, quiet streets rang with the uproarious mirth with which they recapitulated his "damnable faces," "strange postures," uncouth gestures, and ungainly deportment; imitation followed imitation of the poor actor's peculiar declamation, and the night became noisy with the shouts of mingled derision and execration of his critics; when suddenly, as they came to gas-light at the corner of a crossing, a solitary figure which had been preceding them, without possibility of escape, down the long avenue of Harley Street, where G—— lived, turned abruptly round, and confronted them with Mr. Abbot's *unimpressive* countenance. "Gentlemen," he said, "no one can be more aware than myself of the defects of my performance of Romeo, no one more conscious of its entire unworthiness of Miss Kemble's Juliet; but all I can say is, that I do not act the part by my own choice, and shall be delighted to resign it, to either of you who may feel more capable than I am of doing it justice." The young gentlemen, though admiring me "not wisely, but too well," were good-hearted fellows, and were struck with the manly and moderate tone of Mr. Abbot's rebuke, and shocked at having unintentionally wounded the feelings of a person who (except as Romeo) was every way deserving of their respect. Of course they could not swallow all their foolish words, and Abbot bowed and was gone before they could stutter an apology. I have no doubt that his next appearance as Romeo was hailed with some very cordial, remorseful applause, addressed to him personally as some relief to their feelings, by my indiscreet partisans.

Mr. Abbot was in truth not a bad actor, though a perfectly uninteresting one in tragedy; he had a good figure, face, and voice, the carriage and appearance of a well-bred person, and, in what is called genteel comedy, precisely the air and manner which it is most difficult to assume, that of a gentleman. He had been in the army, and had left it for the stage, where his

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performances were always respectable, though seldom anything more. Wanting passion and expression in tragedy, he naturally resorted to vehemence to supply their place, and was exaggerated and violent from the absence of all dramatic feeling and imagination. Moreover, in moments of powerful emotion he was apt to become unsteady on his legs, and always filled me with terror lest in some of his headlong runs and rushes about the stage he should lose his balance and fall; as indeed he once did, to my unspeakable distress, in the play of "The Grecian Daughter," in which he enacted my husband, Phocion, and flying to embrace me, after a period of painful and eventful separation, he completely overbalanced himself, and swinging round with me in his arms, we both came to the ground together. "Oh, Mr. Abbot!" was all I could ejaculate; he, poor man, literally pale green with dismay, picked me up in profound silence, and the audience kindly covered our confusion, and comforted us by vehement applause, not, indeed, unmixed with laughter. But my friends and admirers were none the more his after that exploit; and I remained in mortal dread of his stage embraces forever after, steadying myself carefully on my feet, and bracing my whole figure to "stand fast," whenever he made the smallest affectionate approach toward me. It is not often that such a piece of awkwardness as this is perpetrated on the stage, but dramatic heroines are nevertheless liable to sundry disagreeable difficulties of a very unromantic nature. If a gentleman in a ballroom places his hand round a lady's waist to waltz with her, she can, without any shock to the "situation," beg him to release the end spray of her flowery garland, or the floating ribbons of her head-dress, which he may have imprisoned; but in the middle of a scene of tragedy grief or horror, of the unreality of which, by dint of the effort of your imagination, you are no longer conscious, to be obliged to say, in your distraction, to your distracted partner in woe, "Please lift your arm from my waist,

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you are pulling my head down backwards," is a distraction, too, of its kind.

All being in due preparation for my coming out, my rehearsals were the only interruption to my usual habits of occupation, which I pursued very steadily in spite of my impending trial. On the day of my first appearance I had no rehearsal, for fear of over-fatigue, and spent my morning as usual, in practicing the piano, walking in the inclosure of St. James's Park opposite our house, and reading in "Blunt's Scripture Characters" (a book in which I was then deeply interested) the chapters relating to St. Peter and Jacob. I do not know whether the nervous tension which I must have been enduring strengthened the impression made upon me by what I read, but I remember being quite absorbed by it, which I think was curious, because certainly such subjects of meditation were hardly allied to the painful undertaking so immediately pressing upon me. But I believe I felt imperatively the necessity of moderating my own strong nervous emotion and excitement by the fulfillment of my accustomed duties and pursuits, and above all by withdrawing my mind into higher and serenest regions of thought, as a respite and relief from the pressure of my alternate apprehensions of failure and hopes of success. I do not mean that it was at all a matter of deliberate calculation or reflection, but rather an instinct of self-preservation, which actuated me: a powerful instinct which has struggled and partially prevailed throughout my whole life against the irregular and passionate vehemence of my temperament, and which, in spite of a constant tendency to violent excitement of mind and feeling, has made me a person of unusually systematic pursuits and monotonous habits, and been a frequent subject of astonishment, not unmixed with ridicule to my friends, who have not known as well as myself what wholesomeness there was in the method of my madness. And I am persuaded that religion and reason alike justify such

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strong instinctive action in natures which derive a constant moral support, like that of the unobserved but all-sustaining pressure of the atmosphere, from the soothing and restraining influence of systematic habits of monotonous regularity. Amid infinite anguish and errors, existence may preserve a species of outward symmetry and harmony from this strong band of minute observance keeping down and assisting the mind to master elements of moral and mental discord and disorder, for the due control of which the daily and hourly subjection to recurring rules is an invaluable auxiliary to higher influences. The external practice does not supply, but powerfully supplements the internal principle of self-control.

My mother, who had left the stage for upward of twenty years, determined to return to it on the night of my first appearance, that I might have the comfort and support of her being with me in my trial. We drove to the theater very early, indeed while the late autumn sunlight yet lingered in the sky; it shone into the carriage upon me, and as I screened my eyes from it, my mother said, "Heaven smiles on you, my child." My poor mother went to her dressing-room to get herself ready, and did not return to me for fear of increasing my agitation by her own. My dear aunt Dall and my maid and the theater dresser performed my toilet for me, and at length I was placed in a chair, with my satin train carefully laid over the back of it; and there I sat, ready for execution, with the palms of my hands pressed convulsively together, and the tears I in vain endeavored to repress welling up into my eyes and brimming slowly over, down my rouged cheeks—upon which my aunt, with a smile full of pity, renewed the color as often as these heavy drops made unsightly streaks in it. Once and again my father came to the door, and I heard his anxious, "How is she?" to which my aunt answered, sending him away with words of comforting cheer. At last, "Miss Kemble called for the stage, ma'am!" accompanied with a brisk tap at

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the door, started me upright on my feet, and I was led round to the side scene opposite to the one from which I saw my mother advance on the stage; and while the uproar of her reception filled me with terror, dear old Mrs. Davenport, my nurse, and dear Mr. Keely, her Peter, and half the *dramatis personæ* of the play (but not my father, who had retreated, quite unable to endure the scene) stood round me as I lay, all but insensible, in my aunt's arms. "Courage, courage, dear child! poor thing, poor thing!" reiterated Mrs. Davenport. "Never mind 'em, Miss Kemble!" urged Keely, in that irresistibly comical, nervous, lachrymose voice of his, which I have never since heard without a thrill of anything but comical association; "never mind 'em! don't think of 'em, any more than if they were so many rows of cabbages!" "Nurse!" called my mother, and on waddled Mrs. Davenport, and, turning back, called in her turn, "Juliet!" My aunt gave me an impulse forward, and I ran straight across the stage, stunned with the tremendous shout that greeted me, my eyes covered with mist, and the green baize flooring of the stage feeling as if it rose up against my feet; but I got hold of my mother, and stood like a terrified creature at bay, confronting the huge theater full of gazing human beings. I do not think a word I uttered during this scene could have been audible; in the next, the ballroom, I began to forget myself; in the following one, the balcony scene, I had done so, and, for aught I knew, I was Juliet; the passion I was uttering sending hot waves of blushes all over my neck and shoulders, while the poetry sounded like music to me as I spoke it, with no consciousness of anything before me, utterly transported into the imaginary existence of the play. After this I did not return into myself till all was over, and amid a tumultuous storm of applause, congratulation, tears, embraces, and a general joyous explosion of unutterable relief at the fortunate termination of my attempt, we went home. And so my life was determined, and

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I devoted myself to an avocation which I never liked or honored, and about the very nature of which I have never been able to come to any decided opinion. It is in vain that the undoubted specific gifts of great actors and actresses suggest that all gifts are given for rightful exercise, and not suppression; in vain that Shakespeare's plays urge their imperative claim to the most perfect illustration they can receive from histrionic interpretation: a *business* which is incessant excitement and factitious emotion seems to me unworthy of a man; a business which is public exhibition, unworthy of a woman.

At four different periods of my life I have been constrained to maintain myself by the exercise of my dramatic faculty; latterly, it is true, in a less painful and distasteful manner, by reading, instead of acting. But though I have never, I trust, been ungrateful for the power of thus helping myself and others, or forgetful of the obligation I was under to do my appointed work conscientiously in every respect, or unmindful of the precious good regard of so many kind hearts that it has won for me; though I have never lost one iota of my own intense delight in the act of rendering Shakespeare's creations; yet neither have I ever presented myself before an audience without a shrinking feeling of reluctance, or withdrawn from their presence without thinking the excitement I had undergone unhealthy, and the personal exhibition odious.

Nevertheless, I sat me down to supper that night with my poor, rejoicing parents well content, God knows! with the issue of my trial; and still better pleased with a lovely little Geneva watch, the first I had ever possessed, all incrustated with gold work and jewels, which my father laid by my plate and I immediately christened Romeo, and went, a blissful girl, to sleep with it under my pillow.

It would be difficult to imagine anything more radical than the change which three weeks had made in the aspect of my

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whole life. From an insignificant schoolgirl, I had suddenly become an object of general public interest. I was a little lion in society, and the town talk of the day. Approbation, admiration, adulation, were showered upon me; every condition of my life had been altered, as by the wand of a fairy. Instead of the twenty pounds a year which my poor father squeezed out of his hard-earned income for my allowance, out of which I bought (alas, with how much difficulty, seeing how many other things I would buy!) my gloves and shoes, I now had an assured income, as long as my health and faculties were unimpaired, of at least a thousand a year; and the thirty guineas a week at Covent Garden, and much larger remuneration during provincial tours, forever forbade the sense of destitution productive of the ecstasy with which, only a short time before I came out, I had found wedged into the bottom of my money drawer in my desk a sovereign that I had overlooked, and so had sorrowfully concluded myself penniless till next allowance day. Instead of trudging long distances afoot through the muddy London streets, when the hire of a hackney-coach was matter of serious consideration, I had a comfortable and elegant carriage; I was allowed, at my own earnest request, to take riding lessons, and before long had a charming horse of my own, and was able to afford the delight of giving my father one, the use of which I hoped would help to invigorate and refresh him. The faded, threadbare, turned and dyed frocks which were my habitual wear were exchanged for fashionably made dresses of fresh colors and fine texture in which I appeared to myself transfigured. Our door was besieged with visitors, our evenings bespoken by innumerable invitations; social civilities and courtesies poured in upon us from every side in an incessant stream; I was sought and petted and caressed by persons of conventional and real distinction and every night that I did not act I might, if my parents had thought it prudent to let me do so, have passed in all the

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gayety of the fashionable world and the great London season. So much cordiality, sympathy, interest, and apparent genuine good-will seemed to accompany all these flattering demonstrations, that it was impossible for me not to be touched and gratified,—perhaps, too, unduly elated. If I was spoiled and my head turned, I can only say I think it would have needed a strong head not to be so; but God knows how pitiful a preparation all this tinsel, sudden success, and popularity formed for the duties and trials of my after-life.



IV

PLATONIC DIALOGUE AND IMAGINARY CONVERSATION

This kind of dialogue, where the question is agitated by illustrious personages of former ages, is apt, I know not how, to make a stronger impression on the mind of the reader than any other species of composition.

—CICERO (translated by William Melmoth)



40 THE TRIAL AND DEATH OF SOCRATES ¹

Plato

I

SOCRATES, accused of doing evil, of rejecting the gods worshiped by his fellows, and of corrupting young men with false doctrines, defends himself before his judges, the citizens of Athens.

How you have felt, O men of Athens, at hearing the speeches of my accusers, I cannot tell; but I know that their persuasive words almost made me forget who I was, such was the effect of them; and yet they have hardly spoken a word of truth. But many as their falsehoods were, there was one of them which quite amazed me: I mean when they told you to be upon your guard, and not to let yourselves be deceived by the force of my eloquence. They ought to have been ashamed of saying this, because they were sure to be detected as soon as I opened my lips and displayed my deficiency; they certainly did appear to be most shameless in saying this, unless by the force of eloquence they mean the force of truth; for then I do indeed admit that I am eloquent. But in how different a way from theirs! Well, as I was saying, they have hardly uttered a word, or not more than a word, of truth; but you shall hear from me the whole truth: not, however, delivered after their manner, in a set oration duly ornamented with words and phrases. No, indeed!

¹ Consisting of the *Apology*, together with selected passages from the *Crito* and the *Phædo*. Translated by B. Jowett.

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but I shall use the words and arguments which occur to me at the moment; for I am certain that this is right, and that at my time of life I ought not to be appearing before you, O men of Athens, in the character of a juvenile orator: let no one expect this of me. And I must beg of you to grant me one favor, which is this,—If you hear me using the same words in my defense which I have been in the habit of using, and which most of you may have heard in the agora, and at the table of the money-changers, or anywhere else, I would ask you not to be surprised at this, and not to interrupt me. For I am more than seventy years of age, and this is the first time that I have ever appeared in a court of law, and I am quite a stranger to the ways of the place; and therefore I would have you regard me as if I were really a stranger, whom you would excuse if he spoke in his native tongue, and after the fashion of his country: that I think is not an unfair request. Never mind the manner, which may or may not be good; but think only of the justice of my cause, and give heed to that: let the judges decide justly and the speaker speak truly.

And first, I have to reply to the older charges and to my first accusers, and then I will go on to the later ones. For I have had many accusers, who accused me of old, and their false charges have continued during many years; and I am more afraid of them than of Anytus and his associates, who are dangerous, too, in their own way. But far more dangerous are these, who began when you were children, and took possession of your minds with their falsehoods, telling of one Socrates a wise man, who speculated about the heaven above, and searched into the earth beneath, and made the worse appear the better cause. These are the accusers whom I dread; for they are the circulators of this rumor, and their hearers are too apt to fancy that speculators of this sort do not believe in the gods. And they are many, and their charges against me are of ancient date, and they made them in days when you

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were impressible,—in childhood, or perhaps in youth,—and the cause when heard went by default, for there was none to answer. And hardest of all, their names I do not know and cannot tell; unless in the chance case of a comic poet. But the main body of these slanderers who from envy and malice have wrought upon you,—and there are some of them who are convinced themselves, and impart their convictions to others,—all these, I say, are most difficult to deal with; for I cannot have them up here, and examine them, and therefore I must simply fight with shadows in my own defense, and examine when there is no one who answers. I will ask you then to assume with me, as I was saying, that my opponents are of two kinds,—one recent, the other ancient; and I hope that you will see the propriety of my answering the latter first, for these accusations you heard long before the others, and much oftener.

Well, then, I will make my defense, and I will endeavor in the short time which is allowed to do away with this evil opinion of me which you have held for such a long time and I hope that I may succeed, if this be well for you and me, and that my words may find favor with you. But I know that to accomplish this is not easy—I quite see the nature of the task. Let the event be as God wills: in obedience to the law I make my defense.

I will begin at the beginning, and ask what the accusation is which has given rise to this slander of me, and which has encouraged Meletus to proceed against me. What do the slanderers say? They shall be my prosecutors, and I will sum up their words in an affidavit: "Socrates is an evil-doer, and a curious person, who searches into things under the earth and in heaven, and he makes the worse appear the better cause; and he teaches the aforesaid doctrines to others." That is the nature of the accusation, and that is what you have seen yourselves in the comedy of Aristophanes, who has introduced a

man whom he calls Socrates, going about and saying that he can walk in the air, and talking a deal of nonsense concerning matters of which I do not pretend to know either much or little—not that I mean to say anything disparaging of any one who is a student of natural philosophy. I should be very sorry if Meletus could lay that to my charge. But the simple truth is, O Athenians, that I have nothing to do with these studies. Very many of those here present are witnesses to the truth of this, and to them I appeal. Speak then, you who have heard me, and tell your neighbors, whether any of you have ever known me hold forth in few words or in many upon matters of this sort. . . . You hear their answer. And from what they say of this you will be able to judge of the truth of the rest.

As little foundation is there for the report that I am a teacher, and take money; that is no more true than the other. Although, if a man is able to teach, I honor him for being paid. There is Gorgias of Leontium, and Prodicus of Ceos, and Hippias of Elis, who go the round of the cities, and are able to persuade the young men to leave their own citizens, by whom they might be taught for nothing, and come to them whom they not only pay, but are thankful if they may be allowed to pay them. There is actually a Parian philosopher residing in Athens, of whom I have heard; and I came to hear of him in this way: I met a man who has spent a world of money on the Sophists, Callias the son of Hipponicus, and knowing that he had sons, I asked him: "Callias," I said, "if your two sons were foals or calves, there would be no difficulty in finding some one to put over them; we should hire a trainer of horses, or a farmer probably, who would improve and perfect them in their own proper virtue and excellence; but as they are human beings, whom are you thinking of placing over them? Is there any one who understands human and political virtue? You must have thought about this a

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you have sons; is there any one?" "There is," he said. "Who is he?" said I, "and of what country? and what does he charge?" "Evenus the Parian," he replied; "he is the man, and his charge is five minæ." Happy is Evenus, I said to myself, if he really has this wisdom, and teaches at such a modest charge. Had I the same, I should have been very proud and conceited; but the truth is that I have no knowledge of the kind, O Athenians.

I dare say that some one will ask the question, "Why is this, Socrates, and what is the origin of these accusations of you: for there must have been something strange which you have been doing? All this great fame and talk about you would never have arisen if you had been like other men: tell us, then, why this is, as we should be sorry to judge hastily of you." Now I regard this as a fair challenge, and I will endeavor to explain to you the origin of this name of "wise," and of this evil fame. Please to attend, then. And although some of you may think that I am joking, I declare that I will tell you the entire truth. Men of Athens, this reputation of mine has come of a certain sort of wisdom which I possess. If you ask me what kind of wisdom, I reply, such wisdom as is attainable by man, for to that extent I am inclined to believe that I am wise; whereas the persons of whom I was speaking have a superhuman wisdom, which I may fail to describe, because I have it not myself; and he who says that I have, speaks falsely, and is taking away my character. And here, O men of Athens, I must beg you not to interrupt me, even if I seem to say something extravagant. For the word which I will speak is not mine. I will refer you to a witness who is worthy of credit, and will tell you about my wisdom—whether I have any and of what sort—and that witness shall be the God of Delphi. You must have known Chærephon; he was early a friend of mine, and also a friend of yours, for he shared in the exile of the people, and returned with you.

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Well, Chærephon, as you know, was very impetuous in all his doings, and he went to Delphi and boldly asked the oracle to tell him whether—as I was saying, I must beg you not to interrupt—he asked the oracle to tell him whether there was any one wiser than I was, and the Pythian prophetess answered, that there was no man wiser. Chærephon is dead himself, but his brother, who is in court, will confirm the truth of this story.

Why do I mention this? Because I am going to explain to you why I have such an evil name. When I heard the answer, I said to myself, What can the god mean? and what is the interpretation of this riddle? for I know that I have no wisdom, small or great. What can he mean when he says that I am the wisest of men? And yet he is a god and cannot lie; that would be against his nature. After a long consideration, I at last thought of a method of trying the question. I reflected that if I could only find a man wiser than myself, then I might go to the god with a refutation in my hand. I should say to him, "Here is a man who is wiser than I am; but you said that I was the wisest." Accordingly I went to one who had the reputation of wisdom, and observed to him—his name I need not mention; he was a politician whom I selected for examination—and the result was as follows: When I began to talk with him, I could not help thinking that he was not really wise, although he was thought wise by many, and wiser still by himself; and I went and tried to explain to him that he thought himself wise, but was not really wise; and the consequence was that he hated me, and his enmity was shared by several who were present and heard me. So I left him, saying to myself, as I went away: Well, although I do not suppose that either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is,—for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows. I neither know nor think that I know. In this latter particular, then, I seem to have slightly the ad-

vantage of him. Then I went to another who had still higher philosophical pretensions, and my conclusion was exactly the same. I made another enemy of him, and of many others beside him.

After this I went to one man after another, being not unconscious of the enmity which I provoked, and I lamented and feared this: but necessity was laid upon me,—the word of God, I thought, ought to be considered first. And I said to myself, Go I must to all who appear to know, and find out the meaning of the oracle. And I swear to you, Athenians, by the dog I swear!—for I must tell you the truth—the result of my mission was just this: I found that the men most in repute were all but the most foolish; and that some inferior men were really wiser and better. I will tell you the tale of my wanderings and of the “Herculean” labors, as I may call them, which I endured only to find at last the oracle irrefutable. When I left the politicians, I went to the poets; tragic, dithyrambic, and all sorts. And there, I said to myself, you will be detected; now you will find out that you are more ignorant than they are. Accordingly, I took them some of the most elaborate passages in their own writings, and asked what was the meaning of them—thinking that they would teach me something. Will you believe me? I am almost ashamed to speak of this, but still I must say that there is hardly a person present who would not have talked better about their poetry than they did themselves. That showed me in an instant that not by wisdom do poets write poetry, but by a sort of genius and inspiration; they are like diviners or soothsayers who also say many fine things, but do not understand the meaning of them. And the poets appeared to me to be much in the same case; and I further observed that upon the strength of their poetry they believed themselves to be the wisest of men in other things in which they were not wise. So I departed, conceiving myself to be superior to

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them for the same reason that I was superior to the politicians.

At last I went to the artisans, for I was conscious that I knew nothing at all, as I may say, and I was sure that they knew many fine things; and in this I was not mistaken, for they did know many things of which I was ignorant, and in this they certainly were wiser than I was. But I observed that even the good artisans fell into the same error as the poets; because they were good workmen they thought that they also knew all sorts of high matters, and this defect in them overshadowed their wisdom—therefore I asked myself on behalf of the oracle, whether I would like to be as I was, neither having their knowledge nor their ignorance, or like them in both; and I made answer to myself and the oracle that I was better off as I was.

This investigation has led to my having many enemies of the worst and most dangerous kind, and has given occasion also to many calumnies. And I am called wise, for my hearers always imagine that I myself possess the wisdom which I find wanting in others: but the truth is, O men of Athens, that God only is wise; and in this oracle he means to say that the wisdom of men is little or nothing; he is not speaking of Socrates, he is only using my name as an illustration, as if he said, He, O men, is the wisest, who, like Socrates, knows that his wisdom is in truth worth nothing. And so I go my way, obedient to the god, and make inquiry into the wisdom of any one, whether citizen or stranger, who appears to be wise; and if he is not wise, then in vindication of the oracle I show him that he is not wise; and this occupation quite absorbs me, and I have no time to give either to any public matter of interest or to any concern of my own, but I am in utter poverty by reason of my devotion to the god.

There is another thing:—young men of the richer classes, who have not much to do, come about me of their own accord; they like to hear the pretenders examined, and they often

imitate me, and examine others themselves; there are plenty of persons, as they soon enough discover, who think that they know something, but really know little or nothing; and then those who are examined by them instead of being angry with themselves are angry with me: This confounded Socrates, they say; this villainous misleader of youth!—and then if somebody asks them, Why, what evil does he practice or teach? they do not know, and cannot tell; but in order that they may not appear to be at a loss, they repeat the ready-made charges which are used against all philosophers about teaching things up in the clouds and under the earth, and having no gods, and making the worse appear the better cause; for they do not like to confess that their pretense of knowledge has been detected—which is the truth: and as they are numerous and ambitious and energetic, and are all in battle array and have persuasive tongues, they have filled your ears with their loud and inveterate calumnies. And this is the reason why my three accusers, Meletus and Anytus and Lycon, have set upon me: Meletus, who has a quarrel with me on behalf of the poets; Anytus, on behalf of the craftsmen; Lycon, on behalf of the rhetoricians: and as I said at the beginning, I cannot expect to get rid of this mass of calumny all in a moment. And this, O men of Athens, is the truth and the whole truth; I have concealed nothing, I have dissembled nothing. And yet, I know that this plainness of speech makes them hate me, and what is their hatred but a proof that I am speaking the truth?—this is the occasion and reason of their slander of me, as you will find out either in this or in any future inquiry.

I have said enough in my defense against the first class of my accusers; I turn to the second class who are headed by Meletus, that good and patriotic man, as he calls himself. And now I will try to defend myself against them: these new accusers must also have their affidavit read. What do they say? Something of this sort: That Socrates is a doer of evil,

and corrupter of the youth, and he does not believe in the gods of the state, and has other new divinities of his own. That is the sort of charge; and now let us examine the particular counts. He says that I am a doer of evil, who corrupts the youth; but I say, O men of Athens, that Meletus is a doer of evil, and the evil is that he makes a joke of a serious matter, and is too ready at bringing other men to trial from a pretended zeal and interest about matters in which he really never had the smallest interest. And the truth of this I will endeavor to prove.

Come hither, Meletus, and let me ask a question of you. You think a great deal about the improvement of youth?

Yes I do.

Tell the judges, then, who is their improver; for you must know, as you have taken the pains to discover their corrupter, and are citing and accusing me before them. Speak, then, and tell the judges who their improver is. Observe, Meletus, that you are silent, and have nothing to say. But is not this rather disgraceful, and a very considerable proof of what I was saying, that you have no interest in the matter? Speak up, friend, and tell us who their improver is.

The laws.

But that, my good sir, is not my meaning. I want to know who the person is, who, in the first place, knows the laws.

The judges, Socrates, who are present in court.

What, do you mean to say, Meletus, that they are able to instruct and improve youth?

Certainly they are.

What, all of them, or some only and not others?

All of them.

By the goddess Here, that is good news! There are plenty of improvers, then. And what do you say of the audience,—do they improve them?

Yes, they do.

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And the senators?

Yes, the senators improve them.

But perhaps the ecclesiasts corrupt them?—or do they too improve them?

They improve them.

Then every Athenian improves and elevates them; all with the exception of myself; and I alone am their corrupter? Is that what you affirm?

That is what I stoutly affirm.

I am very unfortunate if that is true. But suppose I ask you a question: Would you say that this also holds true in the case of horses? Does one man do them harm and all the world good? Is not the exact opposite of this true? One man is able to do them good, or at least not many; the trainer of horses, that is to say, does them good, and others who have to do with them rather injure them? Is not that true, Meletus, of horses, or any other animals? Yes, certainly. Whether you and Anytus say yes or no, that is no matter. Happy indeed would be the condition of youth if they had one corrupter only, and all the rest of the world were their improvers. And you, Meletus, have sufficiently shown that you never had a thought about the young: your carelessness is seen in your not caring about the matters spoken of in this very indictment.

And now, Meletus, I must ask you another question: Which is better, to live among bad citizens, or among good ones? Answer, friend, I say; for that is a question which may be easily answered. Do not the good do their neighbors good, and the bad do them evil?

Certainly.

And is there any one who would rather be injured than benefited by those who live with him? Answer, my good friend; the law requires you to answer—does any one like to be injured?

Certainly not.

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And when you accuse me of corrupting and deteriorating the youth, do you allege that I corrupt them intentionally or unintentionally?

Intentionally, I say.

But you have just admitted that the good do their neighbors good, and the evil do them evil. Now, is that a truth which your superior wisdom has recognized thus early in life, and am I, at my age, in such darkness and ignorance as not to know that if a man with whom I have to live is corrupted by me, I am very likely to be harmed by him, and yet I corrupt him, and intentionally, too; that is what you are saying, and of that you will never persuade me or any other human being. But either I do not corrupt them, or I corrupt them unintentionally, so that on either view of the case you lie. If my offense is unintentional, the law has no cognizance of unintentional offenses: you ought to have taken me privately, and warned and admonished me; for if I had been better advised, I should have left off doing what I only did unintentionally,—no doubt I should; whereas you hated to converse with me or teach me, but you indicted me in this court, which is a place, not of instruction, but of punishment.

I have shown, Athenians, as I was saying, that Meletus has no care at all, great or small, about the matter. But still I should like to know, Meletus, in what I am affirmed to corrupt the young. I suppose you mean, as I infer from your indictment, that I teach them not to acknowledge the gods which the state acknowledges, but some other new divinities or spiritual agencies in their stead. These are the lessons which corrupt the youth, as you say.

Yes, that I say emphatically.

Then, by the gods, Meletus, of whom we are speaking, tell me and the court, in somewhat plainer terms, what you mean for I do not as yet understand whether you affirm that I teach others to acknowledge some gods, and therefore do believe

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in gods and am not an entire atheist—this you do not lay to my charge; but only that they are not the same gods which the city recognizes—the charge is that they are different gods. Or, do you mean to say that I am an atheist simply, and a teacher of atheism?

I mean the latter—that you are a complete atheist.

That is an extraordinary statement, Meletus. Why do you say that? Do you mean that I do not believe in the godhead of the sun or moon, which is the common creed of all men?

I assure you, judges, that he does not believe in them; for he says that the sun is stone, and the moon earth.

Friend Meletus, you think that you are accusing Anaxagoras: and you have but a bad opinion of the judges, if you fancy them ignorant to such a degree as not to know that these doctrines are found in the books of Anaxagoras the Clazomenian, who is full of them. And these are the doctrines which the youth are said to learn of Socrates, when there are not unfrequently exhibitions of them at the theater (price of admission one drachma at the most); and they might cheaply purchase them, and laugh at Socrates if he pretends to father such eccentricities. And so, Meletus, you really think that I do not believe in any god?

I swear by Zeus that you believe absolutely in none at all.

You are a liar, Meletus, not believed even by yourself. For I cannot help thinking, O men of Athens, that Meletus is reckless and impudent, and that he has written this indictment in a spirit of mere wantonness and youthful bravado. Has he not compounded a riddle, thinking to try me? He said to himself: I shall see whether this wise Socrates will discover my ingenious contradiction, or whether I shall be able to deceive him and the rest of them. For he certainly does appear to me to contradict himself in the indictment as much as if he said that Socrates is guilty of not believing in the gods, and yet of believing in them—but this surely is a piece of fun.

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I should like you, O men of Athens, to join me in examining what I conceive to be his inconsistency; and do you, Meletus, answer. And I must remind you that you are not to interrupt me if I speak in my accustomed manner.

Did ever man, Meletus, believe in the existence of human things, and not of human beings? . . . I wish, men of Athens, that he would answer, and not be always trying to get up an interruption. Did ever any man believe in horsemanship, and not in horses? or in flute-playing, and not in flute-players? No, my friend; I will answer to you and to the court, as you refuse to answer for yourself. There is no man who ever did. But now please to answer the next question: Can a man believe in spiritual and divine agencies, and not in spirits or demigods?

He cannot.

I am glad that I have extracted that answer, by the assistance of the court; nevertheless you swear in the indictment that I teach and believe in divine or spiritual agencies (new or old, no matter for that); at any rate, I believe in spiritual agencies, as you say and swear in the affidavit; but if I believe in divine beings, I must believe in spirits or demigods; is not that true? Yes, that is true, for I may assume that your silence gives assent to that. Now what are spirits or demigods? are they not either gods or the sons of gods? Is that true?

Yes, that is true.

But this is just the ingenious riddle of which I was speaking: the demigods or spirits are gods, and you say first that you don't believe in gods, and then again that I do believe in gods; that is, if I believe in demigods. For if the demigods are the illegitimate sons of gods, whether by the nymphs or by any other mothers, as is thought, that, as all men will allow, necessarily implies the existence of their parents. You might as well affirm the existence of mules, and deny that of horses.

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and asses. Such nonsense, Meletus, could only have been intended by you as a trial of me. You have put this into the indictment because you had nothing real of which to accuse me. But no one who has a particle of understanding will ever be convinced by you that the same men can believe in divine and superhuman things, and yet not believe that there are gods and demigods and heroes.

I have said enough in answer to the charge of Meletus: any elaborate defense is unnecessary; but as I was saying before, I certainly have many enemies, and this is what will be my destruction if I am destroyed; of that I am certain; not Meletus, nor yet Anytus, but the envy and detraction of the world, which has been the death of many good men, and will probably be the death of many more; there is no danger of my being the last of them.

Some one will say: And are you not ashamed, Socrates, of a course of life which is likely to bring you to an untimely end? To him I may fairly answer: There you are mistaken: a man who is good for anything ought not to calculate the chance of living or dying; he ought only to consider whether in doing anything he is doing right or wrong—acting the part of a good man or of a bad. Whereas, according to your view, the heroes who fell at Troy were not good for much, and the son of Thetis above all, who altogether despised danger in comparison with disgrace; and when his goddess mother said to him, in his eagerness to slay Hector, that if he avenged his companion Patroclus, and slew Hector, he would die himself,—“Fate,” as she said, “waits upon you next after Hector”; he, hearing this, utterly despised danger and death, and instead of fearing them, feared rather to live in dishonor, and not to avenge his friend. “Let me die next,” he replies, “and be avenged of my enemy, rather than abide here by the beaked ships, a scorn and a burden of the earth.” Had Achilles any thought of death and danger? For wher-

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ever a man's place is, whether the place which he has chosen or that in which he has been placed by a commander, there he ought to remain in the hour of danger; he should not think of death or of anything, but of disgrace. And this, O men of Athens, is a true saying.

Strange, indeed, would be my conduct, O men of Athens, if I who, when I was ordered by the generals whom you chose to command me at Potidaea and Amphipolis and Delium, remained where they placed me, like any other man, facing death,—if, I say, now, when, as I conceive and imagine, God orders me to fulfil the philosopher's mission of searching into myself and other men, I were to desert my post through fear of death, or any other fear; that would indeed be strange, and I might justly be arraigned in court for denying the existence of the gods, if I disobeyed the oracle because I was afraid of death: then I should be fancying that I was wise when I was not wise. For this fear of death is indeed the pretense of wisdom, and not real wisdom, being the appearance of knowing the unknown; since no one knows whether death, which they in their fear apprehend to be the greatest evil, may not be the greatest good. Is there not here conceit of knowledge, which is a disgraceful sort of ignorance? And this is the point in which, as I think, I am superior to men in general, and in which I might perhaps fancy myself wiser than other men,—that whereas I know but little of the world below, I do not suppose that I know: but I do know that injustice and disobedience to a better, whether God or man, is evil and dishonorable, and I will never fear or avoid a possible good rather than a certain evil. And therefore if you let me go now, and reject the counsels of Anytus, who said that if I were not put to death I ought not to have been prosecuted, and that if I escape now, your sons will all be utterly ruined by listening to my words,—if you say to me, Socrates, this time we will not mind Anytus, and will let

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you off, but upon one condition, that you are not to inquire and speculate in this way any more, and that if you are caught doing this again you shall die,—if this was the condition on which you let me go, I should reply: Men of Athens, I honor and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you, and while I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy, exhorting any one whom I meet after my manner, and convincing him, saying: O my friend, why do you, who are a citizen of the great and mighty and wise city of Athens, care so much about laying up the greatest amount of money and honor and reputation, and so little about wisdom and truth and the greatest improvement of the soul, which you never regard or heed at all? Are you not ashamed of this? And if the person with whom I am arguing, says: Yes, but I do care; I do not depart or let him go at once; I interrogate and examine and cross-examine him, and if I think that he has no virtue, but only says that he has, I reproach him with undervaluing the greater, and overvaluing the less. And this I should say to every one whom I meet, young and old, citizen and alien, but especially to the citizens, inasmuch as they are my brethren. For this is the command of God, as I would have you know; and I believe that to this day no greater good has ever happened in the state than my service to the God. For I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul. I tell you that virtue is not given by money, but that from virtue come money and every other good of man, public as well as private. This is my teaching, and if this is the doctrine which corrupts the youth my influence is ruinous indeed. But if any one says that this is not my teaching, he is speaking an untruth. Wherefore, O men of Athens, I say to you, do as Anytus bids or not as Anytus bids, and either

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acquit me or not; but whatever you do, know that I shall never alter my ways, not even if I have to die many times.

Men of Athens, do not interrupt, but hear me; there was an agreement between us that you should hear me out. And I think that what I am going to say will do you good: for I have something more to say, at which you may be inclined to cry out; but I beg that you will not do this. I would have you know, that if you kill such a one as I am, you will injure yourselves more than you will injure me. Meletus and Anytus will not injure me: they cannot: for it is not in the nature of things that a bad man should injure a better than himself. I do not deny that he may, perhaps, kill him, or drive him into exile, or deprive him of civil rights; and he may imagine, and others may imagine, that he is doing him a great injury: but in that I do not agree with him; for the evil of doing as Anytus is doing—of unjustly taking away another man's life—is greater far. And now, Athenians, I am not going to argue for my own sake, as you may think, but for yours, that you may not sin against the God, or lightly reject his boon by condemning me. For if you kill me you will not easily find another like me, who, if I may use such a ludicrous figure of speech, am a sort of gadfly, given to the state by the God; and the state is like a great and noble steed who is tardy in his motions owing to his very size, and requires to be stirred into life. I am that gadfly which God has given the state, and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing and persuading and reproaching you. And as you will not easily find another like me, I would advise you to spare me. I dare say that you may feel irritated at being suddenly awakened when you are caught napping; and you may think that if you were to strike me dead as Anytus advises, which you easily might, then you would sleep on for the remainder of your lives, unless God in his care of you gives you another gadfly. And that I am given to you by

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God is proved by this: that if I had been like other men, I should not have neglected all my own concerns, or patiently seen the neglect of them during all these years, and have been doing yours, coming to you individually, like a father or elder brother, exhorting you to regard virtue; this, I say, would not be like human nature. And had I gained anything, or if my exhortations had been paid, there would have been some sense in that: but now, as you will perceive, not even the impudence of my accusers dares to say that I have ever exacted or sought pay of any one; they have no witness of that. And I have a witness of the truth of what I say; my poverty is a sufficient witness.

Some one may wonder why I go about in private, giving advice and busying myself with the concerns of others, but do not venture to come forward in public and advise the state. I will tell you the reason of this. You have often heard me speak of an oracle or sign which comes to me, and is the divinity which Meletus ridicules in the indictment. This sign I have had ever since I was a child. The sign is a voice which comes to me and always forbids me to do something which I am going to do, but never commands me to do anything, and this is what stands in the way of my being a politician. And rightly, as I think. For I am certain, O men of Athens, that if I had engaged in politics, I should have perished long ago, and done no good either to you or to myself. And don't be offended at my telling you the truth: for the truth is, that no man who goes to war with you or any other multitude, honestly struggling against the commission of unrighteousness and wrong in the state, will save his life; he who will really fight for the right, if he would live even for a little while, must have a private station and not a public one.

I can give you as proofs of this, not words only, but deeds, which you value more than words. Let me tell you a passage of my own life, which will prove to you that I should never

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have yielded to injustice from any fear of death, and that if I had not yielded I should have died at once. I will tell you a story—tasteless, perhaps, and commonplace, but nevertheless true. The only office of state which I ever held, O men of Athens, was that of senator; the tribe Antiochis, which is my tribe, had the presidency at the trial of the generals who had not taken up the bodies of the slain after the battle of Arginusae; and you proposed to try them all together, which was illegal, as you all thought afterwards; but at the time I was the only one of the prytanes who was opposed to the illegality, and I gave my vote against you; and when the orators threatened to impeach and arrest me, and have me taken away, and you called and shouted, I made up my mind that I would run the risk, having law and justice with me, rather than take part in your injustice because I feared imprisonment and death. This happened in the days of the democracy. But when the oligarchy of the Thirty was in power, they sent for me and four others into the rotunda, and bade us bring Leon the Salaminian from Salamis, as they wanted to execute him. This was a specimen of the sort of commands which they were always giving with the view of implicating as many as possible in their crimes; and then I showed, not in word only but in deed, that, if I may be allowed to use such an expression, I cared not a straw for death, and that my only fear was the fear of doing an unrighteous or unholy thing. For the strong arm of that oppressive power did not frighten me into doing wrong; and when we came out of the rotunda the other four went to Salamis and fetched Leon, but I went quietly home. For which I might have lost my life, had not the power of the Thirty shortly afterwards come to an end. And to this many will witness.

Now do you really imagine that I could have survived all these years, if I had led a public life, supposing that like a

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good man I had always supported the right and had made justice, as I ought, the first thing? No indeed, men of Athens, neither I nor any other. But I have been always the same in all my actions, public as well as private, and never have I yielded any base compliance to those who are slanderously termed my disciples, or to any other. For the truth is that I have no regular disciples: but if any one likes to come and hear me while I am pursuing my mission, whether he be young or old, he may freely come. Nor do I converse with those who pay only, and not with those who do not pay; but any one, whether he be rich or poor, may ask and answer me and listen to my words; and whether he turns out to be a bad man or a good one, that cannot be justly laid to my charge, as I never taught him anything. And if any one says that he has ever learned or heard anything from me in private which all the world has not heard, I should like you to know that he is speaking an untruth.

But I shall be asked, Why do people delight in continually conversing with you? I have told you already, Athenians, the whole truth about this: they like to hear the cross-examination of the pretenders to wisdom; there is amusement in this. And this is a duty which the God has imposed upon me, as I am assured by oracles, visions, and in every sort of way in which the will of divine power was ever signified to any one. This is true, O Athenians; or, if not true, would be soon refuted. For if I am really corrupting the youth, and have corrupted some of them already, those of them who have grown up and have become sensible that I gave them bad advice in the days of their youth should come forward as accusers and take their revenge; and if they do not like to come themselves, some of their relatives, fathers, brothers, or other kinsmen, should say what evil their families suffered at my hands. Now is their time. Many of them I see in the court. There is Crito, who is of the same age and of the

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same deme with myself; and there is Critobulus his son, whom I also see. Then again there is Lysanias of Sphettus, who is the father of Aeschines,—he is present; and also there is Antiphon of Cephissus, who is the father of Epigenes; and there are the brothers of several who have associated with me. There is Nicostratus the son of Theosdotides, and the brother of Theodotus (now Theodotus himself is dead, and therefore he, at any rate, will not seek to stop him); and there is Paralus the son of Demodocus, who had a brother Theages, and Adeimantus the son of Ariston, whose brother Plato is present; and Æantodorus, who is the brother of Apollodorus, whom I also see. I might mention a great many others, any of whom Meletus should have produced as witnesses in the course of his speech; and let him still produce them, if he has forgotten; I will make way for him. And let him say, if he has any testimony of the sort which he can produce. Nay, Athenians, the very opposite is the truth. For all these are ready to witness on behalf of the corrupter, of the destroyer of their kindred, as Meletus and Anytus call me; not the corrupted youth only,—there might have been a motive for that,—but their uncorrupted elder relatives. Why should they too support me with their testimony? Why, indeed, except for the sake of truth and justice, and because they know that I am speaking the truth, and that Meletus is lying.

Well, Athenians, this and the like of this is nearly all the defense which I have to offer. Yet a word more. Perhaps there may be some one who is offended at me, when he calls to mind how he himself on a similar, or even a less serious occasion, had recourse to prayers and supplications with many tears, and how he produced his children in court, which was a moving spectacle, together with a posse of his relations and friends; whereas I, who am probably in danger of my life, will do none of these things. Perhaps this may come into his mind, and he may be set against me, and vote in anger because

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he is displeased at this. Now if there be such a person among you, which I am far from affirming, I may fairly reply to him: My friend, I am a man, and like other men, a creature of flesh and blood, and not of wood or stone, as Homer says; and I have a family, yes, and sons, O Athenians, three in number, one of whom is growing up, and the two others are still young; and yet I will not bring any of them hither in order to petition you for an acquittal. And why not? Not from any self-will or disregard of you. Whether I am or am not afraid of death is another question, of which I will not now speak. But my reason simply is, that I feel such conduct to be discreditable to myself, and you, and the whole state. One who has reached my years, and who has a name for wisdom, whether deserved or not, ought not to demean himself.¹ At any rate, the world has decided that Socrates is in some way superior to other men. And if those among you who are said to be superior in wisdom and courage, and any other virtue, demean themselves in this way, how shameful is their conduct! I have seen men of reputation, when they have been condemned, behaving in the strangest manner: they seemed to fancy that they were going to suffer something dreadful if they died, and that they could be immortal if you only allowed them to live; and I think that they were a dishonor to the state, and that any stranger coming in would say of them that the most eminent men of Athens, to whom the Athenians themselves give honor and command, are no better than women. And I say that these things ought not to be done by those of us who are of reputation; and if they are done, you ought not to permit them; you ought rather to show that you are more inclined to condemn, not the man who is quiet, but the man who gets up a doleful scene, and makes the city ridiculous.

¹ That is, to do anything that would lower his dignity—an informal use of the expression.

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But, setting aside the question of dishonor, there seems to be something wrong in petitioning a judge, and thus procuring an acquittal instead of informing and convincing him. For his duty is, not to make a present of justice, but to give judgment; and he has sworn that he will judge according to the laws, and not according to his own good pleasure, and neither he nor we should get into the habit of perjuring ourselves—there can be no piety in that. Do not then require me to do what I consider dishonorable and impious and wrong, especially now, when I am being tried for impiety on the indictment of Meletus. For if, O men of Athens, by force of persuasion and entreaty, I could overpower your oaths, then I should be teaching you to believe that there are no gods, and convict myself, in my own defense, of not believing in them. But that is not the case; for I do believe that there are gods, and in a far higher sense than that in which any of my accusers believe in them. And to you and to God I commit my cause, to be determined by you as is best for you and me.

The vote is taken and Socrates is convicted.

There are many reasons why I am not grieved, O men of Athens, at the vote of condemnation. I expected this, and am only surprised that the votes are so nearly equal; for I had thought that the majority against me would have been far larger; but now, had thirty votes gone over to the other side, I should have been acquitted. And I may say that I have escaped Meletus. And I may say more; for without the assistance of Anytus and Lycon, he would not have had a fifth part of the votes, as the law requires, in which case he would have incurred a fine of a thousand drachmæ, as is evident.

And so he proposes death as the penalty. And what shall I propose on my part, O men of Athens? Clearly that which

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is my due. And what is that which I ought to pay or to receive? What shall be done to the man who has never had the wit to be idle during his whole life; but has been careless of what the many care about—wealth, and family interests, and military offices, and speaking in the assembly, and magistracies, and plots, and parties. Reflecting that I was really too honest a man to follow in this way and live, I did not go where I could do no good to you or to myself; but where I could do the greatest good privately to every one of you, thither I went, and sought to persuade every man among you, that he must look to himself, and seek virtue and wisdom before he looks to his private interests, and look to the state before he looks to the interests of the state; and that this should be the order which he observes in all his actions. What shall be done to such a one? Doubtless some good thing, O men of Athens, if he has his reward; and the good should be of a kind suitable to him. What would be a reward suitable to a poor man who is your benefactor, who desires leisure that he may instruct you? There can be no more fitting reward than maintenance in the prytaneum, O men of Athens, a reward which he deserves far more than the citizen who has won the prize at Olympia in the horse or chariot race, whether the chariots were drawn by two horses or by many. For I am in want, and he has enough; and he only gives you the appearance of happiness, and I give you the reality. And if I am to estimate the penalty justly, I say that maintenance in the prytaneum is the just return.

Perhaps you may think that I am braving you in saying this, as in what I said before about the tears and prayers. But that is not the case. I speak rather because I am convinced that I never intentionally wronged any one, although I cannot convince you of that—for we have had a short conversation only; but if there were a law at Athens, such as there is in other cities, that a capital cause should not be decided in one

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day, then I believe that I should have convinced you; but now the time is too short. I cannot in a moment refute great slanders; and, as I am convinced that I never wronged another, I will assuredly not wrong myself. I will not say of myself that I deserve any evil, or propose any penalty. Why should I? Because I am afraid of the penalty of death which Meletus proposes? When I do not know whether death is a good or an evil, why should I propose a penalty which would certainly be an evil? Shall I say imprisonment? And why should I live in prison, and be the slave of the magistrates of the year—of the eleven? Or shall the penalty be a fine, and imprisonment until the fine is paid? There is the same objection. I should have to lie in prison, for money I have none, and cannot pay. And if I say exile (and this may possibly be the penalty which you will affix), I must indeed be blinded by the love of life, if I were to consider that when you, who are my own citizens, cannot endure my discourses and words, and have found them so grievous and odious that you would fain have done with them, others are likely to endure me. No indeed, men of Athens, that is not very likely. And what a life should I lead, at my age, wandering from city to city, living in ever-changing exile, and always being driven out! For I am quite sure that into whatever place I go, as here so also there, the young men will come to me; and if I drive them away, their elders will drive me out at their desire: and if I let them come, their fathers and friends will drive me out for their sakes.

Some one will say: Yes, Socrates, but cannot you hold your tongue, and then you may go into a foreign city, and no one will interfere with you? Now I have great difficulty in making you understand my answer to this. For if I tell you that this would be a disobedience to a divine command, and therefore that I cannot hold my tongue, you will not believe that I am serious; and if I say again that the greater

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good of man is daily to converse about virtue, and all that concerning which you hear me examining myself and others, and that the life which is unexamined is not worth living—that you are still less likely to believe. And yet what I say is true, although a thing of which it is hard for me to persuade you. Moreover, I am not accustomed to think that I deserve any punishment. Had I money I might have proposed to give you what I had, and have been none the worse. But you see that I have none, and can only ask you to proportion the fine to my means. However, I think that I could afford a mina, and therefore I propose that penalty; Plato, Crito, Critobulus, and Apollodorus, my friends here, bid me say thirty minæ, and they will be the sureties. Well, then, say thirty minæ, let that be the penalty; for that they will be ample security to you.

Socrates is condemned to death.

Not much time will be gained, O Athenians, in return for the evil name which you will get from the detractors of the city, who will say that you killed Socrates, a wise man; for they will call me wise even although I am not wise when they want to reproach you. If you had waited a little while, your desire would have been fulfilled in the course of nature. For I am far advanced in years, as you may perceive, and not far from death. I am speaking now only to those of you who have condemned me to death. And I have another thing to say to them: You think that I was convicted through deficiency of words—I mean, that if I had thought fit to leave nothing undone, nothing unsaid, I might have gained an acquittal. Not so; the deficiency which led to my conviction was not of words—certainly not. But I had not the boldness or impudence or inclination to address you as you would have liked me to address you, weeping and wailing and lamenting, and saying and doing many things which you

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have been accustomed to hear from others, and which, as I say, are unworthy of me. But I thought that I ought not to do anything common or mean in the hour of danger: nor do I now repent of the manner of my defense, and I would rather die having spoken after my manner, than speak in your manner and live. For neither in war nor yet at law ought any man to use every way of escaping death. For often in battle there is no doubt that if a man will throw away his arms, and fall on his knees before his pursuers, he may escape death; and in other dangers there are other ways of escaping death if a man is willing to say and do anything. The difficulty, my friends, is not in avoiding death, but in avoiding unrighteousness; for that runs faster than death. I am old and move slowly, and the slower runner has overtaken me, and my accusers are keen and quick, and the faster runner, who is unrighteousness, has overtaken them. And now I depart hence condemned by you to suffer the penalty of death, and they too go their ways condemned by the truth to suffer the penalty of villainy and wrong; and I must abide by my award—let them abide by theirs. I suppose that these things may be regarded as fated,—and I think that they are well.

And now, O men who have condemned me, I would fain prophesy to you; for I am about to die, and that is the hour in which men are gifted with prophetic power. And I prophesy to you who are my murderers, that immediately after my death punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me will surely await you. Me you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser, and not give an account of your lives. But that will not be as you suppose: far otherwise. For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now; accusers whom hitherto I have restrained: and as they are younger they will be more severe with you, and you will be more offended at them. For if you think that by killing men you can avoid the accuser censuring your lives, you are

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mistaken; that is not a way of escape which is either possible or honorable; the easiest and the noblest way is not to be crushing others, but to be improving yourselves. This is the prophecy which I utter before my departure to the judges who have condemned me.

Friends, who would have acquitted me, I would like also to talk with you about this thing which has happened, while the magistrates are busy, and before I go to the place at which I must die. Stay then a while, for we may as well talk with one another while there is time. You are my friends, and I should like to show you the meaning of this event which has happened to me. O my judges—for you I may truly call judges—I should like to tell you of a wonderful circumstance. Hitherto the familiar oracle within me has constantly been in the habit of opposing me even about trifles, if I was going to make a slip or error about anything; and now as you see there has come upon me that which may be thought, and is generally believed to be, the last and worst evil. But the oracle made no sign of opposition, either as I was leaving my house and going out in the morning, or when I was going up into this court, or while I was speaking, at anything which I was going to say; and yet I have often been stopped in the middle of a speech, but now in nothing I either said or did touching this matter has the oracle opposed me. What do I take to be the explanation of this? I will tell you. I regard this as a proof that what has happened to me is a good, and that those of us who think that death is an evil are in error. This is a great proof to me of what I am saying, for the customary sign would surely have opposed me had I been going to evil and not to good.

Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good, for one of two things: either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of

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the soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by the sight of dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man, I will not say a private man, but even the great king¹ will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. Now if death is like this, I say that to die is gain; for eternity is then only a single night. But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say, all the dead are, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this? If indeed when the pilgrim arrives in the world below, he is delivered from the professors of justice in this world, and finds the true judges who are said to give judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Æacus and Triptolemus, and other sons of God who were righteous in their own life, that pilgrimage will be worth making. What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus and Musæus and Hesiod and Homer? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. I, too, shall have a wonderful interest in a place where I can converse with Palamedes, and Ajax the son of Telamon, and other heroes of old, who have suffered death through an unjust judgment; and there will be no small pleasure, as I think, in comparing my own suffering with theirs. Above all, I shall be able to continue my search into true and false knowledge; as in this world, so also in that; I shall find out who is wise, and who pretends to be wise, and is not. What would not a man give, O judges, to be able to examine the leader of the great Trojan expedition; or Odysseus or Sisy-

¹ Of Persia.

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phus, or numberless others, men and women too! What infinite delight would there be in conversing with them and asking them questions! For in that world they do not put a man to death for this; certainly not. For besides being happier in that world than in this, they will be immortal, if what is said is true.

Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know this of a truth—that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that to die and be released was better for me; and therefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reason, also, I am not angry with my accusers or my condemners; they have done me no harm, although neither of them meant to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them.

Still I have a favor to ask of them. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing,—then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, I and my sons will have received justice at your hands.

The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows.

II

Socrates is now in prison. The time draws near for the execution of his sentence, and Crito, an aged friend, is trying to persuade him to escape his jailers

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and fly to a foreign state. Socrates listens to the arguments of his visitor, but, steadfast in his principles, insists that before he can give his consent to such a proposal he must first carefully consider whether or not it would be just and honorable for him to do so. A discussion of the matter has already led Crito to agree to several propositions, including the proposition that neither injury nor retaliation nor warding off evil by evil is ever right, when Socrates asks the question with which the passage opens.

Soc. Ought a man to do what he admits to be right, or ought he to betray the right?

Cr. He ought to do what he thinks right.

Soc. But if this is true, what is the application? In leaving the prison against the will of the Athenians, do I wrong any one or rather do I not wrong those whom I ought least to wrong? Do I not desert the principles which were acknowledged by us to be just? What do you say?

Cr. I cannot tell, Socrates; for I do not know.

Soc. Then consider the matter in this way: Imagine that I am about to play truant (you may call the proceeding by any name which you like), and the laws and the government come and interrogate me: "Tell us, Socrates," they say; "what are you about? are you going by an act of yours to overturn us—the laws and the whole state, as far as in you lies? Do you imagine that a state can subsist and not be overthrown, in which the decisions of law have no power, but are set aside and overthrown by individuals?" What will be our answer, Crito, to these and the like words? Any one, and especially a clever rhetorician, will have a good deal to urge about the evil of setting aside the law which requires a sentence to be carried out; and we might reply, "Yes; but the state has

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injured us and given an unjust sentence." Suppose I say that?

Cr. Very good, Socrates.

Soc. "And was that our agreement with you?" the law would say; "or were you to abide by the sentence of the state?" And if I were to express astonishment at their saying this, the law would probably add: "Answer, Socrates, instead of opening your eyes: you are in the habit of asking and answering questions. Tell us what complaint you have to make against us which justifies you in attempting to destroy us and the state? In the first place did we not bring you into existence? Your father married your mother by our aid and begat you. Say whether you have any objection to urge against those of us who regulate marriage?" None, I should reply. "Or against those of us who regulate the system of nurture and education of children in which you were trained? Were not the laws, who have the charge of this, right in commanding your father to train you in music and gymnastic?" Right, I should reply. "Well then, since you were brought into the world and nurtured and educated by us, can you deny in the first place that you are our child and slave, as your fathers were before you? And if this is true you are not on equal terms with us; nor can you think that you have a right to do to us what we are doing to you. Would you have any right to strike or revile or do any other evil to a father or to your master, if you had one, when you have been struck or reviled by him, or received some other evil at his hands?—You would not say this? And because we think right to destroy you, do you think that you have any right to destroy us in return, and your country as far as in you lies? And will you, O professor of true virtue, say that you are justified in this? Has a philosopher like you failed to discover that our country is more to be valued and higher and holier far than mother or father or any ancestor, and more to be re-

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garded in the eyes of the gods and of men of understanding also to be soothed, and gently and reverently entreated when angry, even more than a father, and if not persuaded, obeyed. And when we are punished by her, whether with imprisonment or stripes, the punishment is to be endured in silence, and if she leads us to wounds or death in battle, thither we follow as is right; neither may any one yield or retreat or leave his rank, but whether in battle or in a court of law, or in any other place, he must do what his city and his country order him; or he must change their view of what is just, and if he may do no violence to his father or mother, much less may he do violence to his country." What answer shall we make to this, Crito? Do the laws speak truly, or do they not?

Cr. I think that they do.

Soc. Then the laws will say: "Consider, Socrates, if this is true, that in your present attempt you are going to do us wrong. For, after having brought you into the world, and nurtured and educated you, and given you and every other citizen a share in every good that we had to give, we further proclaim and give the right to every Athenian, that if he does not like us when he has come of age and has seen the ways of the city, and made our acquaintance, he may go where he pleases and take his goods with him; and none of us laws will forbid him or interfere with him. Any of you who does not like us and the city, and who wants to go to a colony or to any other city, may go where he likes, and take his goods with him. But he who has experience of the manner in which we order justice and administer the state, and still remains, has entered into an implied contract that he will do as we command him. And he who disobeys us is, as we maintain, thrice wrong: first, because in disobeying us he disobeys his parents; secondly, because we are the authors of his education; thirdly, because he has made an agreement

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with us that he will duly obey our commands; and he neither obeys them nor convinces us that our commands are wrong; and we do not rudely impose them, but give him the alternative of obeying or convincing us; that is what we offer, and he does neither. These are the sort of accusations to which, as we were saying, you, Socrates, will be exposed if you accomplish your intentions; you, above all other Athenians." Suppose I ask, why is this? they will justly retort upon me that I above all other men have acknowledged the agreement. "There is clear proof," they will say, "Socrates, that we and the city were not displeasing to you. Of all Athenians you have been the most constant resident in the city, which, as you never leave, you may be supposed to love. For you never went out of the city either to see the games, except once when you went to the Isthmus, or to any other place unless when you were on military service; nor did you travel as other men do. Nor had you any curiosity to know other states or their laws: your affections did not go beyond us and our state; we were your special favorites, and you acquiesced in our government of you; and this is the state in which you begat your children, which is a proof of your satisfaction. Moreover, you might, if you had liked, have fixed the penalty at banishment in the course of the trial—the state which refuses to let you go now would have let you go then. But you pretended that you preferred death to exile, and that you were not grieved at death. And now you have forgotten these fine sentiments, and pay no respect to us the laws, of whom you are the destroyer; and are doing what only a miserable slave would do, running away and turning your back upon the compacts and agreements which you made as a citizen. And first of all answer this very question: Are we right in saying that you agreed to be governed according to us in deed, and not in word only? Is that true or not?" How shall we answer that, Crito? Must we not agree?

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Cr. There is no help, Socrates.

Soc. Then will they not say: "You, Socrates, are breaking the covenants and agreements which you made with us at your leisure, not in any haste or under any compulsion or deception, but having had seventy years to think of them during which time you were at liberty to leave the city, if we were not to your mind, or if our covenants appeared to you to be unfair. You had your choice, and might have gone either to Lacedæmon or Crete, which you often praise for their good government, or to some other Hellenic or foreign state. Whereas you above all other Athenians, seemed to be so fond of the state, or, in other words, of us her laws (for who would like a state that has no laws), that you never stirred out of her: the halt, the blind, the maimed were not more stationary in her than you were. And now you run away and forsake your agreements. Not so, Socrates, if you will take our advice; do not make yourself ridiculous by escaping out of the city.

"For just consider, if you transgress and err in this sort of way, what good will you do, either to yourself or to your friends? That your friends will be driven into exile and deprived of citizenship, or will lose their property, is tolerably certain; and you yourself, if you fly to one of the neighboring cities, as, for example, Thebes or Megara, both of which are well-governed cities, will come to them as an enemy, Socrates, and their government will be against you, and all patriotic citizens will cast an evil eye upon you as a subverter of the laws, and you will confirm in the minds of the judges the justice of their own condemnation of you. For he who is a corrupter of the laws is more than likely to be corrupter of the young and foolish portion of mankind. Will you then flee from well-ordered cities and virtuous men? and is existence worth having on these terms? Or will you go to the city without shame, and talk to them, Socrates? And what will

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you say to them? What you say here about virtue and justice and institutions and laws being the best things among men? Would that be decent of you? Surely not. But if you go away from well-governed states to Crito's friends in Thessaly, where there is great disorder and license, they will be charmed to have the tale of your escape from prison, set off with ludicrous particulars of the manner in which you were wrapped in a goatskin or some other disguise, and metamorphosed as the fashion of runaways is—that is very likely; but will there be no one to remind you that in your old age you violated the most sacred laws from a miserable desire of a little more life? Perhaps not, if you keep them in a good temper; but if they are out of temper you will hear many degrading things; you will live, but how?—as the flatterer of all men, and the servant of all men; and doing what?—eating and drinking in Thessaly, having gone abroad in order that you may get a dinner. And where will be your fine sentiments about justice and virtue then? Say that you wish to live for the sake of your children, that you may bring them up and educate them—will you take them into Thessaly and deprive them of Athenian citizenship? Is that the benefit which you would confer upon them? Or are you under the impression that they will be better cared for and educated here if you are still alive, although absent from them; for that your friends will take care of them? Do you fancy that if you are an inhabitant of Thessaly they will take care of them, and if you are an inhabitant of the other world they will not take care of them? Nay; but if they who call themselves friends are truly friends, they surely will.

“Listen, then, Socrates, to us who have brought you up. Think not of life and children first, and of justice afterwards, but of justice first, that you may be justified before the princes of the world below. For neither will you nor

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any that belong to you be happier or holier or juster in this life, or happier in another, if you do as Crito bids. Now you depart in innocence, a sufferer and not a doer of evil; a victim, not of the laws, but of men. But if you go forth returning evil for evil, and injury for injury, breaking the covenants and agreements which you have made with us, and wronging those whom you ought least to wrong, that is to say yourself, your friends, your country, and us, we shall be angry with you while you live, and our brethren, the laws in the world below, will receive you as an enemy; for they will know that you have done your best to destroy us. Listen then, to us and not to Crito."

This is the voice which I seem to hear murmuring in my ears, like the sound of the flute in the ears of the mystic; that voice, I say, is humming in my ears, and prevents me from hearing any other. And I know that anything more which you may say will be vain. Yet speak, if you have anything to say.

Crito. I have nothing to say, Socrates.

Socrates. Then let me follow the intimations of the will of God.

III

Phædo, the "beloved disciple" of Socrates, has been speaking to Echecrates and others, and giving them a full account of the final scene in the life of his master. He has told them that on the last day many of Socrates' friends were in the prison with him, and is now concluding the report of a long discussion, turning chiefly on the immortality of the soul, and establishing a firm faith therein, which the doomed philosopher had conducted with his accustomed skill and with the utmost composure of mind. At the point reached in the narrative, Socrates has

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just finished an explanation of how, as he conceives the matter, the souls of men after death are variously punished and rewarded. Those who are remarkable for having led holy lives, he says, "are released from this earthly prison, and go to their pure home which is above, and dwell in the purer earth; and those who have duly purified themselves with philosophy, live henceforth altogether without the body, in mansions fairer far than these, which may not be described, and of which the time would fail me to tell."

The opening words of the passage, then, which follow immediately upon the sentence quoted, are the words of Socrates, as repeated by Phædo.

"Wherefore, Simmias, seeing all these things, what ought not we to do in order to obtain virtue and wisdom in this life? Fair is the prize, and the hope great.

"I do not mean to affirm that the description which I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true — a man of sense ought hardly to say that. But I do say that, inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal, he may venture to think, not improperly or unworthily, that something of the kind is true. The venture is a glorious one, and he ought to comfort himself with words like these, which is the reason why I lengthen out the tale. Wherefore, I say, let a man be of good cheer about his soul, who has cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body as alien to him, and rather hurtful in their effects, and has followed after the pleasures of knowledge in this life; who has adorned the soul in her own proper jewels, which are temperance, and justice, and courage, and nobility, and truth—in these arrayed she is ready to go on her journey to the world below, when her time comes. You, Simmias and Cebes, and all other men, will depart at some time or other. Me

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already, as the tragic poet would say, the voice of fate calls. Soon I must drink the poison; and I think I had better repair to the bath first, in order that the women may not have the trouble of washing my body after I am dead."

When he had done speaking, Crito said: "And have you any commands for us, Socrates—anything to say about your children, or any other matter in which we can serve you?"

"Nothing particular," he said: "only, as I have always told you, I would have you look to yourselves; that is a service which you may always be doing to me and mine as well as to yourselves. And you need not make professions; for if you take no thought for yourselves, and walk not according to the precepts which I have given you, not now for the first time, the warmth of your professions will be of no avail."

"We will do our best," said Crito. "But in what way would you have us bury you?"

"In any way that you like; only you must get hold of me, and take care that I do not walk away from you." Then he turned to us, and added with a smile: "I cannot make Crito believe that I am the same Socrates who have been talking and conducting the argument; he fancies that I am the other Socrates whom he will soon see, a dead body—and he asks, How shall he bury me? And though I have spoken many words in the endeavor to show that when I have drunk the poison I shall leave you and go to the joys of the blessed,—these words of mine, with which I comforted you and myself, have had, as I perceive, no effect upon Crito. And therefore I want you to be surety for me now, as he was surety for me at the trial: but let the promise be of another sort; for he was my surety to the judges that I would remain, but you must be my surety to him that I shall not remain, but go away and depart; and then he will suffer less at my death, and not be grieved when he sees my body being burned or buried. I would not have him sorrow at my hard lot, or say at the burial, Thus we lay

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out Socrates, or, Thus we follow him to the grave or bury him; for false words are not only evil in themselves, but they infect the soul with evil. Be of good cheer then, my dear Crito, and say that you are burying my body only, and do with that as is usual, and as you think best."

When he had spoken these words, he arose and went into the bath-chamber with Crito, who bid us wait; and we waited, talking and thinking of the subject of the discourse, and also of the greatness of our sorrow; he was like a father of whom we were being bereaved, and we were about to pass the rest of our lives as orphans. When he had taken the bath his children were brought to him—he had two young sons and an elder one; and the women of his family also came, and he talked to them and gave them a few directions in the presence of Crito; and he then dismissed them and returned to us.

Now the hour of sunset was near, for a good deal of time had passed while he was within. When he came out, he sat down with us again after his bath, but not much was said. Soon the jailer, who was the servant of the eleven, entered and stood by him, saying: "To you, Socrates, whom I know to be the noblest and gentlest and best of all who ever came to this place, I will not impute the angry feelings of other men, who rage and swear at me when, in obedience to the authorities, I bid them drink the poison—indeed I am sure that you will not be angry with me; for others, as you are aware, and not I, are the guilty cause. And so fare you well, and try to bear lightly what must needs be; you know my errand." Then bursting into tears he turned away and went out.

Socrates looked at him and said: "I return your good wishes, and will do as you bid." Then turning to us, he said: "How charming the man is: since I have been in prison he has always been coming to see me, and at times he would talk to me, and was as good as could be to me, and now see how generously he

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sorrows for me. But we must do as he says, Crito; let the cup be brought, if the poison is prepared: if not, let the attendant prepare some."

"Yet," said Crito, "the sun is still upon the hill-tops, and many a one has taken the draught late, and after the announcement has been made to him, he has eaten and drunk, and indulged in sensual delights; do not hasten then, there is still time."

Socrates said: "Yes, Crito, and they of whom you speak are right in doing thus, for they think that they will gain by the delay; but I am right in not doing thus, for I do not think that I should gain anything by drinking the poison a little later; I should be sparing and saving a life which is already gone: I could only laugh at myself for this. Please then to do as I say, and not to refuse me."

Crito, when he heard this, made a sign to the servant; and the servant went in, and remained for some time, and then returned with the jailer carrying the cup of poison. Socrates said: "You, my good friend, who are experienced in these matters, shall give me directions how I am to proceed." The man answered: "You have only to walk about until your legs are heavy, and then to lie down, and the poison will act." At the same time he handed the cup to Socrates, who in the easiest and gentlest manner, without the least fear or change of color or feature, looking at the man with all his eyes, Echecrates, as his manner was, took the cup and said: "What do you say about making a libation out of this cup to any god? May I, or not?" The man answered: "We only prepare, Socrates, just so much as we deem enough." "I understand," he said: "yet I may and must pray to the gods to prosper my journey from this to that other world—may this then, which is my prayer, be granted to me." Then holding the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison. And hitherto most of us had been able to control

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our sorrow; but now when we saw him drinking, and saw too that he had finished the draught, **we could no longer forbear**, and in spite of myself my own tears were flowing fast; so that I covered my face and wept over myself, for certainly I was not weeping over him, but at the thought of my own calamity in having lost such a companion. Nor was I the first, for Crito, when he found himself unable to restrain his tears, had got up and moved away, and I followed; and at that moment, Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out into a loud cry which made cowards of us all. Socrates alone retained his calmness. "What is this strange outcry?" he said. "I sent away the women mainly in order that they might not offend in this way, for I have heard that a man should die in peace. Be quiet then, and have patience." When we heard that, we were ashamed, and refrained our tears; and he walked about until, as he said, his legs began to fail, and then he lay on his back, according to the directions, and the man who gave him the poison now and then looked at his feet and legs; and after a while he pressed his foot hard and asked him if he could feel; and he said, No; and then his leg, and so upwards and upwards, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And he felt them himself, and said: "When the poison reaches the heart, that will be the end." He was beginning to grow cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face, for he had covered himself up, and said (they were his last words)—he said: "Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt?" "The debt shall be paid," said Crito; "is there anything else?" There was no answer to this question; but in a minute or two a movement was heard, and the attendants uncovered him; his eyes were set, and Crito closed his eyes and mouth.

Such was the end, Echecrates, of our friend, whom I may truly call the wisest, and justest, and best of all the men whom I have ever known.

Walter Savage Landor

ÆSOP and Rhodope are fellow-slaves, among many others, in the household of Xanthus, in Egypt. Æsop is the Phrygian writer of fables, Rhodope a beautiful Thracian child. This is not the first time they have conversed together, and already a delicate and tender attachment—feared, it seems, rather than invited by the wise Æsop—has grown up between them.

Æsop. And so, our fellow-slaves are given to contention on the score of dignity?

Rhodope. I do not believe they are much addicted to contention: for, whenever the good Xanthus hears a signal of such misbehavior, he either brings a scourge into the midst of them, or sends our lady to scold them smartly for it.

Æsop. Admirable evidence against their propensity!

Rhodope. I will not have you find them out so, nor laugh at them.

Æsop. Seeing that the good Xanthus and our lady are equally fond of thee, and always visit thee both together, the girls, however envious, cannot well or safely be arrogant, but must of necessity yield the first place to thee.

Rhodope. They indeed are observant of the kindness thus bestowed upon me: yet they afflict me by taunting me continually with what I am unable to deny.

Æsop. If it is true, it ought little to trouble thee; if untrue, less. I know, for I have looked into nothing else of late, no evil can thy heart have admitted: a sigh of thine before the Gods would remove the heaviest that could fall on it.

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Pray tell me what it may be. Come, be courageous; be cheerful. I can easily pardon a smile if thou empleadest me of curiosity.

Rhodope. They remark to me that enemies or robbers took them forcibly from their parents . . . and that . . . and that . . .

Æsop. Likely enough: what then? Why desist from speaking? why cover thy face with thy hair and hands? Rhodope! Rhodope! Dost thou weep moreover?

Rhodope. It is so sure!

Æsop. Was the fault thine?

Rhodope. O that it were . . . if there was any.

Æsop. While it pains thee to tell it, keep thy silence: but when utterance is a solace, then impart it.

Rhodope. They remind me (oh! who could have had the cruelty to relate it?) that my father, my own dear father . . .

Æsop. Say not the rest: I know it: his day was come.

Rhodope. Sold me, sold me. You start: you did not at the lightning, last night, nor at the rolling sounds above. And do you, generous Æsop! do you also call a misfortune disgrace?

Æsop. If it is, I am among the most disgraceful of men. Didst thou dearly love thy father?

Rhodope. All loved him. He was very fond of me.

Æsop. And yet sold thee! sold thee to a stranger!

Rhodope. He was the kindest of all kind fathers, nevertheless. Nine summers ago, you may have heard perhaps, there was a grievous famine in our land of Thrace.

Æsop. I remember it perfectly.

Rhodope. O poor Æsop! and were you too famishing in our native Phrygia?

Æsop. The calamity extended beyond the narrow sea that separates our countries. My appetite was sharpened: but the appetite and the wits are equally set on the same grindstone.

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Rhodope. I was then scarcely five years old: my mother died the year before: my father sighed at every funereal, but he sighed more deeply at every bridal, song. He loved me because he loved her who bore me: and yet I made him sorrowful whether I cried or smiled. If ever I vexed him it was because I would not play when he told me, but made him, by my weeping, weep again.

Æsop. And yet he could endure to lose thee! he, thy father! Could any other? could any who lives on the fruit of the earth, endure it? O age, that art incumbent over me, blessed be thou; thrice blessed! Not that thou stillest the tumults of the heart, and promisest eternal calm, but that, prevented by thy beneficence, I never shall experience this only intolerable wretchedness.

Rhodope. Alas! alas!

Æsop. Thou art now happy, and shouldst not utter this useless exclamation.

Rhodope. You said something angrily and vehemently when you stepped aside. Is it not enough that the handmaiden doubt the kindness of my father? Must so virtuous and so wise a man as *Æsop* blame him also?

Æsop. Perhaps he is little to be blamed; certainly he is much to be pitied.

Rhodope. Kind heart! on which mine must never rest.

Æsop. Rest on it for comfort and for counsel when thou fail thee: rest on it, as the Deities on the breast of mortals, to console and purify it.

Rhodope. Could I remove any sorrow from it, I should be contented.

Æsop. Then be so; and proceed in thy narrative.

Rhodope. Bear with me a little yet. My thoughts have overpowered my words, and now themselves are overpowered and scattered.

Forty-seven days ago (this is only the forty-eighth since

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I beheld you first) I was a child: I was ignorant, I was careless.

Æsop. If these qualities are signs of childhood, the universe is a nursery.

Rhodope. Affliction, which makes many wiser, had no such effect on me. But reverence and love (why should I hesitate at the one avowal more than at the other?) came over me, to ripen my understanding.

Æsop. O Rhodope! we must loiter no longer upon this discourse.

Rhodope. Why not?

Æsop. Pleasant is yonder beanfield, seen over the high papyrus when it waves and bends: deep-laden with the sweet heaviness of its odor is the listless air that palpitates dizzily above it: but death is lurking for the slumberer beneath its blossoms.

Rhodope. You must not love then! . . . but may not I?

Æsop. We will . . . but . . .

Rhodope. *We!* O sound that is to vibrate on my breast for ever! O hour! happier than all other hours since time began! O gracious Gods! who brought me into bondage!

Æsop. Be calm, be composed, be circumspect. We must hide our treasure that we may not lose it.

Rhodope. I do not think that you can love me; and I fear and tremble to hope so. Ah, yes; you have said you did. But again you only look at me, and sigh as if you repented.

Æsop. Unworthy as I may be of thy fond regard, I am not unworthy of thy fullest confidence: why distrust me?

Rhodope. Never will I . . . never, never. To know that I possess your love, surpasses all other knowledge, dear as is all that I receive from you. I should be tired of my own voice if I heard it on aught beside: and even yours is less melodious in any other sound than *Rhodope*.

Æsop. Do such little girls learn to flatter?

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Rhodope. Teach me how to speak, since you could not teach me how to be silent.

Æsop. Speak no longer of me, but of thyself; and only of things that never pain thee.

Rhodope. Nothing can pain me now.

Æsop. Relate thy story then, from infancy.

Rhodope. I must hold your hand: I am afraid of losing you again.

Æsop. Now begin. Why silent so long?

Rhodope. I have dropped all memory of what is told by me and what is untold.

Æsop. Recollect a little, I can be patient with this hand in mine.

Rhodope. I am not certain that yours is any help to recollection.

Æsop. Shall I remove it?

Rhodope. O! now I think I can recall the whole story. What did you say? did you ask any question?

Æsop. None, excepting what thou hast answered.

Rhodope. Never shall I forget the morning when my father, sitting in the coolest part of the house, exchanged his last measure of grain for a chlamys of scarlet cloth fringed with silver. He watched the merchant out of the door, and then looked wistfully into the corn-chest. I, who thought there was something worth seeing, looked in also, and, finding it empty, expressed my disappointment, not thinking however about the corn. A faint and transient smile came over his countenance at the sight of mine. He unfolded the chlamys, stretched it out with both hands before me, and then cast it over my shoulders. I looked down on the glittering fringe and screamed with joy. He then went out; and I know not what flowers he gathered, but he gathered many; and some he placed in my bosom, and some in my hair. But I told him with captious pride, first that I could arrange them

better, and again that I would have only the white. However, when he had selected all the white, and I had placed a few of them according to my fancy, I told him (rising in my slipper) he might crown me with the remainder. The splendor of my apparel gave me a sensation of authority. Soon as the flowers had taken their station on my head, I expressed a dignified satisfaction at the taste displayed by my father, just as if I could have seen how they appeared! But he knew that there was at least as much pleasure as pride in it, and perhaps we divided the latter (alas! not both) pretty equally. He now took me into the market-place, where a concourse of people was waiting for the purchase of slaves. Merchants came and looked at me; some commending, others disparaging; but all agreeing that I was slender and delicate, that I could not live long, and that I should give much trouble. Many would have bought the chlamys, but there was something less saleable in the child and flowers.

Æsop. Had thy features been coarse and thy voice rustic, they would all have patted thy cheeks and found no fault in thee.

Rhodope. As it was, every one had bought exactly such another in time past, and been a loser by it. At these speeches I perceived the flowers tremble slightly on my bosom, from my father's agitation. Although he scoffed at them, knowing my healthiness, he was troubled internally, and said many short prayers, not very unlike imprecations, turning his head aside. Proud was I, prouder than ever, when at last several talents were offered for me, and by the very man who in the beginning had undervalued me the most, and prophesied the worst of me. My father scowled at him, and refused the money. I thought he was playing a game, and began to wonder what it could be, since I never had seen it played before. Then I fancied it might be some celebration because plenty had returned to the city, insomuch that my father had bartered the

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last of the corn he hoarded. I grew more and more delighted at the sport. But soon there advanced an elderly man, who said gravely, "Thou hast stolen this child: her vesture alone is worth above a hundred drachmas. Carry her home again to her parents, and do it directly, or Nemesis and the Eumenides will overtake thee." Knowing the estimation in which my father had always been holden by his fellow-citizens, I laughed again, and pinched his ear. He, although naturally choleric, burst forth into no resentment at these reproaches, but said calmly, "I think I know thee by name, O guest! Surely thou art Xanthus the Samian. Deliver this child from famine."

Again I laughed aloud and heartily; and, thinking it was now my part of the game, I held out both my arms and protruded my whole body toward the stranger. He would not receive me from my father's neck, but he asked me with benignity and solicitude if I was hungry: at which I laughed again, and more than ever: for it was early in the morning, soon after the first meal, and my father had nourished me most carefully and plentifully in all the days of the famine. But Xanthus, waiting for no answer, took out of a sack, which one of his slaves carried at his side, a cake of wheaten bread and a piece of honeycomb, and gave them to me. I held the honeycomb to my father's mouth, thinking it the most of a dainty. He dashed it to the ground; but, seizing the bread, he began to devour it ferociously. This also I thought was in play; and I clapped my hands at his distortions. But Xanthus looked on him like one afraid, and smote the cake from him, crying aloud, "Name the price." My father now placed me in his arms, naming a price much below what the other had offered, saying, "The Gods are ever with thee, O Xanthus! therefore to thee do I consign my child." But while Xanthus was counting out the silver, my father seized the cake again, which the slave had taken up and was about to replace in the

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wallet. His hunger was exasperated by the taste and the delay. Suddenly there arose much tumult. Turning round in the old woman's bosom who had received me from Xanthus, I saw my beloved father struggling on the ground, livid and speechless. The more violent my cries, the more rapidly they hurried me away; and many were soon between us. Little was I suspicious that he had suffered the pangs of famine long before: alas! and he had suffered them for me. Do I weep while I am telling you they ended? I could not have closed his eyes; I was too young; but I might have received his last breath; the only comfort of an orphan's bosom. Do you now think him blamable, O *Æsop*?

Æsop. It was sublime humanity: it was forbearance and self-denial which even the immortal gods have never shown us. He could endure to perish by those torments which alone are both acute and slow: he could number the steps of death and miss not one: but he could never see thy tears, nor let thee see his. O weakness above all fortitude! Glory to the man who rather bears a grief corroding his breast, than permits it to prowl beyond, and to prey on the tender and compassionate. Women commiserate the brave, and men the beautiful. The dominion of Pity has usually this extent, no wider. Thy father was exposed to the obloquy not only of the malicious, but also of the ignorant and thoughtless, who condemn in the unfortunate what they applaud in the prosperous. There is no shame in poverty or in slavery, if we neither make ourselves poor by our improvidence nor slaves by our venality. The lowest and highest of the human race are sold: most of the intermediate are also slaves, but slaves who bring no money in the market.

Rhodope. Surely the great and powerful are never to be purchased: are they?

Æsop. It may be a defect in my vision, but I cannot see greatness on the earth. What they tell me is great and

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aspiring, to me seems little and crawling. Let me meet thy question with another. What monarch gives his daughter for nothing? Either he receives stone walls and unwilling cities in return, or he barter her for a parcel of spears and horses and horsemen, waving away from his declining and helpless age young joyous life, and trampling down the freshest and the sweetest memories. Midas in the height of prosperity would have given his daughter to Lycaon, rather than to the gentlest, the most virtuous, the most intelligent of his subjects. Thy father threw wealth aside, and, placing thee under the protection of Virtue, rose up from the house of Famine to partake in the festivals of the gods.

Release my neck, O Rhodope! for I have other questions to ask of thee about him.

Rhodope. To hear thee converse on him in such a manner, I can do even that.

Æsop. Before the day of separation was he never sorrowful? did he never by tears or silence reveal the secret of his soul?

Rhodope. I was too infantine to perceive or imagine his intention. The night before I became the slave of Xanthus, he sat on the edge of my bed. I pretended to be asleep: he moved away silently and softly. I saw him collect in the hollow of his hand the crumbs I had wasted on the floor, and then eat them, and then look if any were remaining. I thought he did so out of fondness for me, remembering that, even before the famine, he had often swept up off the table the bread I had broken, and had made me put it between his lips. I would not dissemble very long, but said:

"Come, now you have awakened me, you must sing me asleep again, as you did when I was little."

He smiled faintly at this, and, after some delay, when he had walked up and down the chamber, thus began:

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"I will sing to thee one song more, my wakeful Rhodope! my chirping bird! over whom is no mother's wing! That it may lull thee asleep, I will celebrate no longer, as in the days of wine and plenteousness, the glory of Mars, guiding in their invisible rapid onset the dappled steeds of Rhæsus. What hast thou to do, my little one, with arrows tired of clustering in the quiver? How much quieter is thy pallet than the tents which whitened the plain of Simöis! What knowest thou about the river Eurotas? What knowest thou about its ancient palace, once trodden by assembled Gods, and then polluted by the Phrygian? What knowest thou of perfidious men or of sanguinary deeds?

"Pardon me, O goddess who presidest in Cytherea! ¹ I am not irreverent to thee, but ever grateful. May she upon whose brow I lay my hand, praise and bless thee for evermore!

"Ah yes! continue to hold up above the coverlet those fresh and rosy palms clasped together: her benefits have descended on thy beauteous head, my child! The Fates also have sung, beyond thy hearing, of pleasanter scenes than snow-fed Hebrus; of more than dim grottos and sky-bright waters. Even now a low murmur swells upwards to my ear: and not from the spindle comes the sound, but from those who sing slowly over it, bending all three their tremulous heads together. I wish thou couldst hear it; for seldom are their voices so sweet. Thy pillow intercepts the song perhaps: lie down again, lie down, my Rhodope! I will repeat what they are saying:

"Happier shalt thou be, nor less glorious, than even she, the truly beloved, for whose return to the distaff and the lyre the portals of Tænarus flew open.² In the woody dells of Ismarus, and when she bathed among the swans of Strymon, the Nymphs called her Eurydice. Thou shalt behold that fairest and that fondest one hereafter. But first thou must go

¹ Aphrodite, goddess of love.

² An allusion to the story of Orpheus and Eurydice.

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unto the land of the lotos,¹ where famine never cometh, and where alone the works of man are immortal.’

“O my child! the undeceiving Fates have uttered this. Other Powers have visited me, and have strengthened my heart with dreams and visions. We shall meet again, my Rhodope! in shady groves and verdant meadows, and we shall sit by the side of those who loved us.”

He was rising: I threw my arms about his neck, and, before I would let him go, I made him promise to place me, not by the side, but between them: for I thought of her who had left us. At that time there were but two, O *Æsop*.

You ponder: you are about to reprove my assurance in having thus repeated my own praises. I would have omitted some of the words, only that it might have disturbed the measure and cadences, and have put me out. They are the very words my dearest father sang; and they are the last: yet shame upon me! the nurse (the same who stood listening near, who attended me into this country) could remember them more perfectly: it is from her I have learnt them since: she often sings them, even by herself.

Æsop. So shall others. There is much both in them and in thee to render them memorable.

Rhodope. Who flatters now?

Æsop. Flattery often runs beyond Truth, in a hurry to embrace her; but not here. The dullest of mortals, seeing and hearing thee, could never misinterpret the prophecy of the Fates.

If, turning back, I could overpass the vale of years, and could stand on the mountain-top, and could look again far before me at the bright ascending morn, we would enjoy the prospect together; we would walk along the summit hand in hand, O Rhodope, and we would only sigh at last when we found ourselves below with others.

¹ That is, to Egypt.

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*. . . a letter may be written upon
anything or nothing just as that anything or
nothing happens to occur.*

—WILLIAM COWPER

August 6, 1780

MY DEAR FRIEND—You like to hear from me: this is a very good reason why I should write.—But I have nothing to say: this seems equally a good reason why I should not. Yet if you had alighted from your horse at our door this morning, and at this present writing, being five o'clock in the afternoon, had found occasion to say to me—"Mr. Cowper, you have not spoke since I came in; have you resolved never to speak again?" it would be but a poor reply, if in answer to the summons I should plead inability as my best and only excuse. And this by the way suggests to me a seasonable piece of instruction, and reminds me of what I am very apt to forget, when I have any epistolary business in hand, that a letter may be written upon anything or nothing just as that anything or nothing happens to occur. A man that has a journey before him twenty miles in length, which he is to perform on foot, will not hesitate and doubt whether he shall set out or not, because he does not readily conceive how he shall ever reach the end of it: for he knows, that by the simple operation of moving one foot forward first, and then the other, he shall be sure to accomplish it. So it is in the present case, and so it is in every similar case. A letter is written as a conversation is maintained, or a journey performed; not by preconcerted or premeditated means, a new contrivance, or an invention never heard of before,—but merely by maintaining a progress, and resolving as a postilion does, having once set out, never to stop till we reach the appointed end. If a man may talk without thinking, why may he not write upon the same terms? A grave gentleman of the last century, a tie-wig, square-toe, Steinkirk

figure, would say—"My good sir, a man has no right to do either." But it is to be hoped that the present century has nothing to do with the moldy opinions of the last; and so good Sir Launcelot, or Sir Paul, or whatever be your name, step into your picture-frame again, and look as if you thought for another century, and leave us moderns in the meantime to think when we can, and to write whether we can or not, else we might as well be dead as you are.

When we look back upon our forefathers, we seem to look back upon the people of another nation, almost upon creatures of another species. Their vast rambling mansions, spacious halls and painted casements, the Gothic porch smothered with honey suckles, their little gardens and high walls, their box-edgings, balls of holly, and yew-tree statues, are become so entirely unfashionable now, that we can hardly believe it possible, that a people who resembled us so little in their taste, should resemble us in anything else. But in everything else, I suppose, they were our counterparts exactly; and time, that has sewed up the slashed sleeve, and reduced the large trunk hose to a neat pair of silk stockings, has left human nature just where it found it. The inside of the man at least has undergone no change. His passions, appetites, and aims are just what they ever were. They wear perhaps a handsomer disguise than they did in days of yore; for philosophy and literature will have their effect upon the exterior; but in every other respect a modern is only an ancient in a different dress.

W. C. [WILLIAM COWPER]

TO CLOTWORTHY ROWLEY, ESQ.

September 2, 1762

DEAR ROWLEY—Your letter has taken me just in the crisis; to-morrow I set off for Brighthelmston, and there I stay till the winter brings us all to town again. This world is a shabby fellow, and uses us ill; but a few years hence there will be no difference between us and our fathers of the tenth generation upwards. I could be as splenetic as you, and with more reason, if I thought proper to indulge that humor; but my resolution is (and I would advise you to adopt it), never to be melancholy while I have a hundred pounds in the world to keep up my spirits. God knows how long that will be; but in the meantime *Io Triumphe!*¹ If a great man struggling with misfortunes is a noble object, a little man that despises them is no contemptible one; and this is all the philosophy I have in the world at present. It savors pretty much of the ancient stoic; but till the Stoics became coxcombs, they were, in my opinion, a very sensible sect.

If my resolution to be a great man was half so strong as it is to despise the shame of being a little one, I should not despair of a house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, with all its appendances; for there is nothing more certain, and I could prove it by a thousand instances, than that every man may be rich if he will. What is the industry of half the industrious men in the world but avarice, and call it by which name you will, it almost always succeeds. But this provokes me, that a covetous dog who will work by candlelight in a morning, to get what he does not want, shall be praised for his thriftiness, while a gentleman shall be abused for submitting to his wants,

¹ Ho triumph!

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rather than work like an ass to relieve them. Did you ever in your life know a man who was guided in the general course of his actions by anything but his natural temper? And yet we blame each other's conduct as freely as if that temper was the most tractable beast in the world, and we had nothing to do but to twitch the rein to the right or the left, and go just as we are directed by others! All this is nonsense, and nothing better.

There are some sensible folks, who having great estates have wisdom enough too to spend them properly; there are others who are not less wise, perhaps, as knowing how to shift without 'em. Between these two degrees are they who spend their money dirtily, or get it so. If you ask me where they are to be placed who amass much wealth in an honest way, you must be so good as to find them first, and then I'll answer the question. Upon the whole, my dear Rowley, there is a degree of poverty that has no disgrace belonging to it; that degree of it, I mean, in which a man enjoys clean linen and good company; and if I never sink below this degree of it, I care not if I never rise above it. This is a strange epistle, nor can I imagine how the devil I came to write it: but here it is, such as it is, and much good may you do with it. I have no estate as it happens, so if it should fall into bad hands, I shall be in no danger of a commission of lunacy. Adieu! Carr is well, and gives his love to you.—Yours ever,

WM. COWPER

November 17, 1783

MY DEAR FRIEND—A parcel arrived last night, the contents of which shall be disposed of according to order. We thank Mrs. Newton (not from the teeth outwards) for the tooth-brushes.

The country around us is much alarmed with apprehensions of fire. Two have happened since that of Olney. One at Hitchin, where the damage is said to amount to eleven thousand pounds, and another, at a place not far from Hitchin, of which I have not learned the name. Letters have been dropped at Bedford, threatening to burn the town; and the inhabitants have been so intimidated as to have placed a guard in many parts of it, several nights past. Some madman or some devil has broke loose, who it is to be hoped will pay dear for these effusions of his malignity. Since our conflagration here, we have sent two women and a boy to the justice, for depredation; Sue Riviss, for stealing a piece of beef, which, in her excuse, she said she intended to take care of. This lady, whom you will remember, escaped for want of evidence; not that evidence was indeed wanting, but our men of Gotham judged it unnecessary to send it. With her went the woman I mentioned before, who, it seems, has made some sort of profession,¹ but upon this occasion allowed herself a latitude of conduct rather inconsistent with it, having filled her apron with wearing apparel, which she likewise intended to take care of. She would have gone to the county gaol, had Billy Raban, the baker's son, who prosecuted, insisted upon it; but he good-naturedly, though I think weakly, interposed in her favor, and

¹ Of religion.

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begged her off. The young gentleman who accompanied these fair ones is the junior son of Molly Boswell. He had stolen some ironwork, the property of Griggs, the butcher. Being convicted, he was ordered to be whipped, which operation he underwent at the cart's tail, from the stone-house to the high arch, and back again. He seemed to show great fortitude, but it was all an imposition upon the public. The beadle, who performed, had filled his left hand with red ocher, through which, after every stroke, he drew the lash of his whip, leaving the appearance of a wound upon the skin, but in reality not hurting him at all. This being perceived by Mr. Constable Hinschcomb, who followed the beadle, he applied his cane, without any such management or precaution, to the shoulders of the too merciful executioner. The scene immediately became more interesting. The beadle could by no means be prevailed upon to strike hard, which provoked the constable to strike harder; and this double flogging continued, till a lass of Silver-end, pitying the pitiful beadle thus suffering under the hands of the pitiless constable, joined the procession, and placing herself immediately behind the latter, seized him by his capillary club, and pulling him backwards by the same, slapped his face with a most Amazonian fury. The concatenation of events has taken up more of my paper than I intended it should, but I could not forbear to inform you how the beadle threshed the thief, the constable the beadle, and the lady the constable, and how the thief was the only person concerned who suffered nothing. . . .

Swift observes, when he is giving his reasons why the preacher is elevated always above his hearers, that let the crowd be as great as it will below, there is always room enough overhead. If the French philosophers can carry their art of flying to the perfection they desire, the observation may be reversed, the crowd will be overhead, and they will have most room who stay below. I can assure you, however, upon

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my own experience, that this way of traveling is very delightful. I dreamed, a night or two since, that I drove myself through the upper regions in a balloon and pair, with the greatest ease and security. Having finished the tour I intended, I made a short turn, and, with one flourish of my whip, descended; my horses prancing and curvetting with an infinite share of spirit, but without the least danger, either to me or my vehicle. The time, we may suppose, is at hand, and seems to be prognosticated by my dream, when these airy excursions will be universal, when judges will fly the circuit, and bishops their visitations; and when the tour of Europe will be performed with much greater speed, and with equal advantage, by all who travel merely for the sake of having it to say, that they have made it.

I beg you will accept for yourself and yours our unfeigned love, and remember me affectionately to Mr. Bacon, when you see him.—Yours, my dear Friend,

WM. COWPER

[1751]

MY DEAR MOTHER—If you will sit down and calmly listen to what I say, you shall be fully resolved in every one of those many questions you have asked me. I went to Cork, and converted my horse, which you prize so much higher than Fiddle-back, into cash, took my passage in a ship bound for America, and, at the same time, paid the captain for my freight and all the other expenses of my voyage. But it so happened that the wind did not answer for three weeks; and you know, mother, that I could not command the elements. My misfortune was, that, when the wind served, I happened to be with a party in the country, and my friend the captain never inquired after me, but set sail with as much indifference as if I had been on board. The remainder of my time I employed in the city and its environs, viewing everything curious, and you know no one can starve while he has money in his pocket.

Reduced, however, to my last two guineas, I began to think of my dear mother and friends whom I had left behind me, and so bought that generous beast Fiddle-back, and bade adieu to Cork with only five shillings in my pocket. This, to be sure, was but a scanty allowance for man and horse towards a journey of above a hundred miles; but I did not despair, for I knew I must find friends on the road.

I recollected particularly an old and faithful acquaintance I made at college, who had often and earnestly pressed me to spend a summer with him, and he lived but eight miles from Cork. This circumstance of vicinity he would expatiate on to me with peculiar emphasis. "We shall," says he, "enjoy

the delights of both city and country, and you shall command my stable and my purse."

However, upon the way, I met a poor woman all in tears, who told me her husband had been arrested for a debt he was not able to pay, and that his eight children must now starve, bereaved as they were of his industry, which had been their only support. I thought myself at home, being not far from my good friend's house, and therefore parted with a moiety of all my store; and pray, mother, ought I not have given her the other half-crown, for what she got would be of little use to her? However, I soon arrived at the mansion of my affectionate friend, guarded by the vigilance of a huge mastiff, who flew at me, and would have torn me to pieces but for the assistance of a woman, whose countenance was not less grim than that of the dog; yet she with great humanity relieved me from the jaws of this Cerberus, and was prevailed on to carry up my name to her master.

Without suffering me to wait long, my old friend, who was then recovering from a severe fit of sickness, came down in his nightcap, nightgown, and slippers, and embraced me with the most cordial welcome, showed me in, and, after giving me a history of his indisposition, assured me that he considered himself peculiarly fortunate in having under his roof the man he most loved on earth, and whose stay with him must, above all things, contribute to his perfect recovery. I now repented sorely I had not given the poor woman the other half-crown, as I thought all my bills of humanity would be punctually answered by this worthy man. I revealed to him my whole soul; I opened to him all my distresses; and freely owned that I had but one half-crown in my pocket; but that now, like a ship after weathering out the storm, I considered myself secure in a safe and hospitable harbor. He made no answer, but walked about the room, rubbing his hands as one in deep study. This I imputed to the sympathetic

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feelings of a tender heart, which increased my esteem for him, and as that increased, I gave the most favorable interpretation to his silence. I construed it into delicacy of sentiment, as if he dreaded to wound my pride by expressing his commiseration in words, leaving his generous conduct to speak for itself.

It now approached six o'clock in the evening; and as I had eaten no breakfast, and as my spirits were raised, my appetite for dinner grew uncommonly keen. At length the old woman came into the room with two plates, one spoon, and a dirty cloth, which she laid upon the table. This appearance, without increasing my spirits, did not diminish my appetite. My protectress soon returned with a small bowl of sago, a small porringer of sour milk, a loaf of stale brown bread, and the heel of an old cheese all over crawling with mites. My friend apologized that his illness obliged him to live on slops, and that better fare was not in the house; observing, at the same time, that a milk diet was certainly the most healthful; and at eight o'clock he again recommended a regular life, declaring that for his part he would *lie down with the lamb and rise with the lark*. My hunger was at this time so exceedingly sharp that I wished for another slice of the loaf, but was obliged to go to bed without even that refreshment.

This Lenten entertainment I had received made me resolve to depart as soon as possible; accordingly, next morning, when I spoke of going, he did not oppose my resolution; he rather commended my design, adding some very sage counsel upon the occasion. "To be sure," said he, "the longer you stay away from your mother the more you will grieve her and your other friends; and possibly they are already afflicted at hearing of this foolish expedition you have made." Notwithstanding all this, and without any hope of softening such a sordid heart, I again renewed the tale of my distress, and asking "how he thought I could travel above a hundred miles upon one half-crown?" I begged to borrow a single guinea which I assured

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him should be repaid with thanks. "And you know, sir," said I, "it is no more than I have done for you." To which he firmly answered, "Why, look you, Mr. Goldsmith, that is neither here nor there, I have paid you all you ever lent me, and this sickness of mine has left me bare of cash. But I have bethought myself of a conveyance for you; sell your horse, and I will furnish you a much better one to ride on." I readily grasped at his proposal, and begged to see the nag; on which he led me to his bedchamber, and from under the bed he pulled out a stout oak stick. "Here he is," said he; "take this in your hand, and it will carry you to your mother's with more safety than such a horse as you ride." I was in doubt, when I got it into my hand, whether I should not in the first place apply it to his pate; but a rap at the street door made the wretch fly to it, and when I returned to the parlor, he introduced me, as if nothing of the kind had happened, to the gentleman who entered, as Mr. Goldsmith, his most ingenious and worthy friend, of whom he had so often heard him speak with rapture. I could scarcely compose myself; and must have betrayed indignation in my mien to the stranger, who was a counselor-at-law in the neighborhood, a man of engaging aspect and polite address.

After spending an hour, he asked my friend and me to dine with him at his house. This I declined at first, as I wished to have no further communication with my hospitable friend; but at the solicitation of both I at last consented, determined as I was by two motives; one, that I was prejudiced in favor of the looks and manner of the counselor; and the other, that I stood in need of a comfortable dinner. And there, indeed, I found everything that I could wish, abundance without profusion, and elegance without affectation. In the evening, when my old friend, who had eaten very plentifully at his neighbor's table, but talked again of lying down with the lamb, made a motion to me for retiring, our

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generous host requested I should take a bed with him, upon which I plainly told my old friend that he might go home and take care of the horse he had given me, but that I should never re-enter his doors. He went away with a laugh, leaving me to add this to the other little things the counselor already knew of his plausible neighbor.

And now, my dear mother, I found sufficient to reconcile me to all my follies; for here I spent three whole days. The counselor had two sweet girls to his daughters, who played enchantingly on the harpsichord; and yet it was but a melancholy pleasure I felt the first time I heard them: for that being the first time also that either of them had touched the instrument since their mother's death, I saw the tears in silence trickle down their father's cheeks. I every day endeavored to go away, but every day was pressed and obliged to stay. On my going, the counselor offered me his purse, with a horse and servant to convey me home; but the latter I declined, and only took a guinea to bear my necessary expenses on the road.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

[1566]

I HAVE received two letters from you, one written in Latin, the other in French, which I take in good part, and will you to exercise that practice of learning often: for that will stand you in most stead, in that profession of life that you are born to live in. And, since this is my first letter that ever I did write to you, I will not, that it be all empty of some advices, which my natural care of you provoked me to wish you to follow, as documents to you in this your tender age. Let your first action be, the lifting up of your mind to Almighty God, by hearty prayer, and feelingly digest the words you speak in prayer, with continual meditation, and thinking of him to whom you pray, and of the matter for which you pray. And use this as an ordinary, and at an ordinary hour.¹ Whereby the time itself will put you in remembrance to do that which you are accustomed to do. In that time apply your study to such hours as your discreet master doth assign you, earnestly; and the time (I know) he will so limit, as shall be both sufficient for your learning, and safe for your health. And mark the sense and the matter of that you read, as well as the words. So shall you both enrich your tongue with words, and your wit with matter; and judgment will grow as years groweth in you. Be humble and obedient to your master, for unless you frame yourself to obey others, yea, and feel in yourself what obedience is, you shall never be able to teach others how to obey you. Be courteous of gesture, and affable to all men, with diversity of reverence, according to the dignity of the person. There is nothing that winneth

¹ As a regular exercise, and at a regular hour.

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so much with so little cost. Use moderate diet, so as, after your meat, you may find your wit fresher, and not duller, and your body more lively, and not more heavy. Seldom drink wine, and yet sometime do, lest being enforced to drink upon the sudden, you should find yourself inflamed. Use exercise of body, but such as is without peril of your joints or bones. It will increase your force, and enlarge your breath. Delight to be cleanly, as well in all parts of your body, as in your garments. It shall make you grateful in each company, and otherwise loathsome. Give yourself to be merry, for you degenerate from your father, if you find not yourself most able in wit and body, to do anything, when you be most merry; but let your mirth be ever void of all scurrility, and biting words to any man, for a wound given by a word is oftentimes harder to be cured than that which is given with the sword. Be you rather a hearer and bearer away of other men's talk, than a beginner or procurer of speech, otherwise you shall be counted to delight to hear yourself speak. If you hear a wise sentence, or an apt phrase, commit it to your memory, with respect of the circumstance, when you shall speak it. Let never oath be heard to come out of your mouth, nor words of ribaldry; detest it in others, so shall custom make to yourself a law against it in yourself. Be modest in each assembly, and rather be rebuked of light fellows, for maiden-like shamefacedness, than of your sad ¹ friends for pert boldness. Think upon every word that you will speak, before you utter it, and remember how nature hath rampired up (as it were) the tongue with teeth, lips, yea, and hair without the lips, and all be-tokening reins, or bridles, for the loose use of that member. Above all things tell no untruth, no, not in trifles. The custom of it is naughty,² and let it not satisfy you, that, for a time, the hearers take it for a truth; for after it will be known as it is, to your shame; for there cannot be a greater reproach

¹ Serious.

² Wicked.

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to a gentleman than to be accounted a liar. Study and endeavor yourself to be virtuously occupied. So shall you make such an habit of well-doing in you, that you shall not know how to do evil, though you would. Remember, my son, the noble blood you are descended of, by your mother's side; and think that only by virtuous life and good action, you may be an ornament to that illustrious family; and otherwise, through vice and sloth, you shall be counted *labes generis*,¹ one of the greatest curses that can happen to man. Well (my little Philip) this is enough for me, and too much, I fear, for you. But if I shall find that this light meal of digestion nourish anything the weak stomach of your young capacity, I will, as I find the same grow stronger, feed it with tougher food. Your loving father, so long as you live in the fear of God.

[SIR HENRY SIDNEY]

¹ A discredit to your race.

47 TO HIS SON, PHILIP STANHOPE, ESQ.

LONDON, *September 22, 1749*

DEAR BOY—If I had faith in philters and love potions, I should suspect that you had given Sir Charles Williams some, by the manner in which he speaks of you, not only to me but to everybody else. I will not repeat to you what he says of the extent and correctness of your knowledge, as it might either make you vain or persuade you that you had already enough of what nobody can have too much. You will easily imagine how many questions I asked, and how narrowly I sifted him upon your subject: he answered me, and I dare say with truth, just as I could have wished; till, satisfied entirely with his accounts of your character and learning, I inquired into other matters, intrinsically indeed of less consequence, but still of great consequence to every man, and of more to you than to almost any man; I mean, your address, manners, and air. To these questions, the same truth which he had observed before obliged him to give me much less satisfactory answers. And, as he thought himself, in friendship both to you and me, obliged to tell me the disagreeable as well as the agreeable truths, upon the same principle I think myself obliged to repeat them to you.

He told me, then, that in company you were frequently most *provokingly* inattentive, absent, and *distract*.¹ That you came into a room, and presented yourself, very awkwardly; that at table you constantly threw down knives, forks, napkins, bread, etc., and that you neglected your person and dress to a degree unpardonable at any age, and much more so at yours.

These things, how immaterial soever they may seem to

¹ Absent-minded.

people who do not know the world and the nature of mankind, give me, who know them to be exceedingly material, very great concern. I have long distrusted you, and therefore frequently admonished you, upon these articles; and I tell you plainly that I shall not be easy till I hear a very different account of them. I know no one thing more offensive to a company than that inattention and *distraction*. It is showing them the utmost contempt; and people never forget contempt. No man is *distract* with the man he fears, or the woman he loves; which is a proof that every man can get the better of that *distraction* when he thinks it worth his while to do so; and, take my word for it, it is always worth his while. For my own part, I would rather be in company with a dead man than with an absent one; for if the dead man gives me no pleasure, at least he shows me no contempt; whereas the absent man, silently indeed, but very plainly, tells me that he does not think me worth his attention. Besides, can an absent man make any observations upon the characters, customs, and manners of the company? No. He may be in the best companies all his lifetime (if they will admit him, which, if I were they, I would not), and never be one jot the wiser. I never will converse with an absent man; one may as well talk with a deaf one. It is, in truth, a practical blunder to address ourselves to a man who we see plainly neither hears, minds, nor understands us. Moreover, I aver that no man is, in any degree, fit for either business or conversation, who cannot, and does not, direct and command his attention to the present object, be that what it will.

You know, by experience, that I grudge no expense in your education, but I will positively not keep you a flapper. You may read in Dr. Swift the description of these flappers, and the use they were of to your friends the Laputans; whose minds (Gulliver says) are so taken up with intense speculations, that they neither can speak nor attend to the discourses

of others, without being roused by some external action upon the organs of speech and hearing; for which reason those people who are able to afford it always keep a flapper in their family as one of their domestics, nor ever walk about or make visits without him. This flapper is likewise employed diligently to attend his master in his walks, and, upon occasion, to give a soft flap upon his eyes; because he is always so wrapt up in cogitation that he is in manifest danger of falling down every precipice, and bouncing his head against every post, and, in the streets, of jostling others or being jostled into the kennel himself. If *Christian* will undertake this province into the bargain—with all my heart; but I will not allow him any increase of wages upon that score.

In short, I give you fair warning that when we meet, if you are absent in mind, I will soon be absent in body, for it will be impossible for me to stay in the room; and if at table you throw down your knife, plate, bread, etc., and hack the wing of a chicken for half an hour without being able to cut it off, and your sleeve all the time in another dish, I must rise from the table to escape the fever you would certainly give me. Good God! how I should be shocked if you came into my room, for the first time, with two left legs, presenting yourself with all the graces and dignity of a tailor, and your clothes hanging upon you like those in Monmouth Street, upon tenterhooks! whereas I expect, nay require, to see you present yourself with the easy and genteel air of a man of fashion who has kept good company. I expect you not only well dressed, but very well dressed; I expect a gracefulness in all your motions, and something particularly engaging in your address. All this I expect, and all this is in your power, by care and attention, to make me find; but, to tell you the plain truth, if I do not find it we shall not converse very much together; for I cannot stand inattention and awkwardness; it would endanger my health.

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You have often seen, and I have often made you observe, L[yttelton]'s distinguished¹ inattention and awkwardness. Wrapped up, like a Laputan, in intense thought, and possibly sometimes in no thought at all—which, I believe, is very often the case of absent people—he does not know his most intimate acquaintance by sight, or answers them as if he were at cross-purposes. He leaves his hat in one room, his sword in another, and would leave his shoes in a third, if his buckles, though awry, did not save them: his legs and arms, by his awkward management of them, seem to have undergone the *question extraordinaire*;² and his head, always hanging upon one or other of his shoulders, seems to have received the first stroke upon a block. I sincerely value and esteem him for his parts, learning, and virtue; but, for the soul of me, I cannot love him in company. This will be universally the case, in common life, of every inattentive, awkward man, let his real merit and knowledge be ever so great.

When I was of your age, I desired to shine, as far as I was able, in every part of life; and was as attentive to my manners, my dress, and my air, in company on evenings, as to my books and my tutor in the mornings. A young fellow should be ambitious to shine in everything; and, of the two, rather overdo than underdo. These things are by no means trifles; they are of infinite consequence to those who are to be thrown into the great world, and who would make a figure or a fortune in it. It is not sufficient to deserve well; one must please well too. Awkward, disagreeable merit will never carry anybody far. Wherever you find a good dancing-master, pray let him put you upon your haunches; not so much for the sake of dancing as for coming into a room and presenting yourself genteelly and gracefully. Women, whom you ought to en-

¹ Marked.

² Extreme torture, formerly applied to accused or condemned persons in order to extort confessions.

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deavor to please, cannot forgive a vulgar and awkward air and gestures; *il leur faut du brillant*.¹ The generality of men are pretty like them, and are equally taken by the same exterior graces.

I am very glad that you have received the diamond buckles safe: all I desire in return for them is that they may be buckled even upon your feet, and that your stockings may not hide them. I should be sorry you were an egregious fop; but I protest that, of the two, I would rather have you a fop than a sloven. I think negligence in my own dress, even at my age, when certainly I expect no advantages from my dress, would be indecent with regard to others. I have done with fine clothes; but I will have my plain clothes fit me, and made like other people's. In the evenings, I recommend to you the company of women of fashion, who have a right to attention, and will be paid it. Their company will smooth your manners, and give you a habit of attention and respect; of which you will find the advantage among men.

My plan for you, from the beginning, has been to make you shine, equally in the learned and in the polite world;; the former part is almost completed to my wishes, and will, I am persuaded, in a little time more be quite so. The latter part is still in your power to complete; and I flatter myself that you will do it; or else the former part will avail you very little, especially in your deportment, where the exterior address and graces do half the business; they must be the harbingers of your merit, or your merit will be very coldly received: all can and do judge of the former, few of the latter.

Mr. Harte² tells me that you have grown very much since your illness: if you get up to five feet ten, or even nine, inches your figure will, probably, be a good one; and, if well dressed

¹ They require polished manners.

² The young man's tutor and traveling companion.

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and genteel, will probably please; which is a much greater advantage to a man than people commonly think. Lord Bacon calls it a letter of recommendation.

I would wish you to be the *omnis homo, l'homme universel*.¹ You are nearer it, if you please, than ever anybody was at your age; and if you will but, for the course of this next year only, exert your whole attention to your studies in the morning, and to your address, manners, air and *tournure*² in the evenings, you will be the man I wish you, and the man that is rarely seen.

Our letters go, at best, so irregularly, and so often miscarry totally, that, for greater security, I repeat the same things. So, though I acknowledged by last post Mr. Harte's letter of the 8th September, N. S., I acknowledge it again by this to you. If this should find you still at Verona, let it inform you that I wish you would set out soon for Naples; unless Mr. Harte should think it better for you to stay at Verona, or any other place on this side Rome, till you go there for the Jubilee. Nay, if he likes it better, I am willing that you should go directly from Verona to Rome; for you cannot have too much of Rome, whether upon account of the language, the curiosities, or the company. My only reason for mentioning Naples is for the sake of the climate, upon account of your health; but, if Mr. Harte thinks your health is now so well restored as to be above climate, he may steer your course wherever he thinks proper; and, for aught I know, your going directly to Rome, and consequently staying there so much the longer, may be as well as anything else. I think you and I cannot put our affairs into better hands than in Mr. Harte's; and I will take his infallibility against the Pope's, with some odds on his side. *À propos* of the Pope; remember to be presented to him before you leave Rome, and go through the necessary cere-

¹ The complete man, the universal man.

² Physical appearance and carriage.

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monies for it . . . ; for I would never deprive myself of anything that I wanted to do or see by refusing to comply with an established custom. When I was in Catholic countries, I never declined kneeling in their churches at the elevation,¹ nor elsewhere when the Host went by. It is a complaisance due to the custom of the place, and by no means, as some silly people have imagined, an implied approbation of their doctrine. Bodily attitudes and situations are things so very indifferent in themselves that I would quarrel with nobody about them. It may, indeed, be improper for Mr. Harte to pay that tribute of complaisance, upon account of his character.²

This letter is a very long, and possibly a very tedious one; but my anxiety for your perfection is so great, and particularly at this critical and decisive period of your life, that I am only afraid of omitting, but never of repeating, or dwelling too long upon anything that I think may be of the least use to you. Have the same anxiety for yourself that I have for you, and all will do well.—Adieu! my dear child.

[LORD CHESTERFIELD]

¹ The act of raising the consecrated elements in the Roman Catholic ceremonial. The "Host," below, is the bread used in the Mass, before or after consecration.

² His profession—that of clergyman in the Protestant Church of England.

48 TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE EARL
OF CHESTERFIELD¹

February 7, 1755

MY LORD—I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of *The World*, that two papers, in which my *Dictionary* is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished is an honor, which, being very little accustomed to favors from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*; ²—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to

¹ Johnson had paid Lord Chesterfield the compliment of addressing to him the *Plan* of his *Dictionary*, but, in return, instead of aid in his great enterprise, he had received only neglect. "When the *Dictionary* was upon the eve of publication, Lord Chesterfield, who, it is said, had flattered himself with expectation that Johnson would dedicate the work to him, attempted in a courtly manner to soothe and insinuate himself with the Sage, conscious, as it should seem, of the cold indifference with which he had treated its learned author; and further attempted to conciliate him by writing two papers in *The World* in recommendation of the work; and it must be confessed that they contain some studied compliments, so finely turned, that if there had been no previous offence it is probable that Johnson would have been highly delighted. Praise, in general, was pleasing to him; but by praise from a man of rank and elegant accomplishments he was peculiarly gratified. . . . This courtly device failed of its effect. Johnson, who thought that 'all was false and hollow,' despised the honeyed words, and was even indignant that Lord Chesterfield should for a moment imagine that he could be the dupe of such an artifice. His expression to me [Boswell] concerning Lord Chesterfield, upon this occasion, was, 'Sir, after making great professions, he had, for many years, taken no notice of me; but when my *Dictionary* was coming out, he fell a-scribbling in *The World* about it. Upon which, I wrote him a letter expressed in civil terms, but such as might show him that I did not mind what he said or wrote, and that I had done with him.'"—Boswell, *Life of Johnson*.

² "The conqueror of the conqueror of the earth"—part of a famous line from Boileau's *Art of Poetry*.

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continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favor. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love; and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity, not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favorer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble

Most obedient servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

20 July, 1819

DEAR MISS KELLY—We had the pleasure, pain I might better call it, of seeing you last night in the new play. It was a most consummate piece of acting, but what a task for you to undergo! at a time when your heart is sore from real sorrow! it has given rise to a train of thinking, which I cannot suppress.

Would to God you were released from this way of life; that you could bring your mind to consent to take your lot with us, and throw off for ever the whole burden of your Profession. I neither expect or wish you to take notice of this which I am writing, in your present over-occupied and hurried state. But to think of it at your leisure. I have quite income enough, if that were all, to justify for me making such a proposal, with what I may call even a handsome provision for my survivor. What you possess of your own would naturally be appropriated to those, for whose sakes chiefly you have made so many hard sacrifices. I am not so foolish as not to know that I am a most unworthy match for such a one as you, but you have for years been a principal object in my mind. In many a sweet assumed character I have learned to love you, but simply as F. M. Kelly I love you better than them all. Can you quit these shadows of existence, and come and be a reality to us? Can you leave off harassing yourself to please a thankless multitude, who knows nothing of you, and begin at last to live to yourself and your friends?

As plainly and frankly as I have seen you give or refuse assent in some feigned scene, so frankly do me the justice to answer me. It is impossible I should feel injured or

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aggrieved by your telling me at once, that the proposal does not suit you. It is impossible that I should ever think of molesting you with idle importunity and persecution after your mind [is] once firmly spoken—but happier, far happier, could I have leave to hope a time might come, when our friends might be your friends; our interests yours; our book-knowledge, if in that inconsiderable particular we have any little advantage, might impart something to you, which you would every day have it in your power ten thousand fold to repay by the added cheerfulness and joy which you could not fail to bring as a dowry into whatever family should have the honor and happiness of receiving *you*, the most welcome accession that could be made to it.

In haste, but with entire respect and deepest affection, I subscribe myself

C. LAMB

TO CHARLES LAMB

HENRIETTA STREET, *July 20th, 1819*

AN early and deeply rooted attachment has fixed my heart on one from whom no worldly prospect can well induce me to withdraw it, but while I thus frankly and decidedly decline your proposal, believe me, I am not insensible to the high honor which the preference of such a mind as yours confers upon me—let me, however, hope that all thought upon this subject will end with this letter, and that you will henceforth encourage no other sentiment towards me than esteem in my private character and a continuance of that approbation of my humble talents which you have already expressed so much and so often to my advantage and gratification.

Believe me I feel proud to acknowledge myself

Your obliged friend,

F. M. KELLY

July 20th, 1819

DEAR MISS KELLY—*Your injunctions shall be obeyed to a tittle.* I feel myself in a lackadaisical no-how-ish kind of a humor. I believe it is the rain, or something. I had thought to have written seriously, but I fancy I succeed best in epistles of mere fun; puns and *that* nonsense. You will be good friends with us, will you not? Let what has past “break no bones” between us. You will not refuse us them next time we send for them? ¹—Yours very truly,

C. L. [Charles Lamb]

¹ The “bones” last alluded to were small ivory discs entitling the bearer to free admission at the theater.

[No date]

DEAR SIR—It is an observation of a wise man that “moderation is best in all things.” I cannot agree with him “in liquor.” There is a smoothness and oiliness in wine that makes it go down by a natural channel, which I am positive was made for that descending. Else, why does not wine choke us? could Nature have made that sloping lane, not to facilitate the down-going? She does nothing in vain. You know that better than I. You know how often she has helped you at a dead lift, and how much better entitled she is to a fee than yourself sometimes, when you carry off the credit. Still there is something due to manners and customs, and I should apologize to you and Mrs. Asbury for being absolutely carried home upon a man’s shoulders through Silver Street, up Parson’s Lane, by the Chapels (which might have taught me better), and then to be deposited like a dead log at Gaffar Westwood’s, who it seems does not “insure” against intoxication. Not that the mode of conveyance is objectionable. On the contrary, it is more easy than a one-horse chaise. Ariel in the *Tempest* says

“On a Bat’s back do I fly
After sunset merrily.”¹

Now I take it that Ariel must sometimes have stayed out late of nights. Indeed, he pretends that “where the bee sucks, there sucks he,” as much as to say that his suction is as innocent as that little innocent (but damnably stinging when he is provoked) winged creature. But I take it, that Ariel was

¹ Both here and in the following quotation Lamb has in mind the Shakespearean text as emended by Theobald, the eighteenth-century editor.

fond of metheglin, of which the bees are notorious brewers. But then you will say: What a shocking sight to see a middle-aged gentleman-and-a-half riding upon a gentleman's back up Parson's Lane at midnight! Exactly the time for that sort of conveyance, when nobody can see him, nobody but Heaven and his own conscience; now Heaven makes fools, and don't expect much from her own creation; and as for conscience, she and I have long since come to a compromise. I have given up false modesty, and she allows me to abate a little of the true. I like to be liked, but I don't care about being respected. I don't respect myself. But, as I was saying, I thought he would have let me down just as we got to Lieutenant Barker's coal-shed (or emporium), but by a cunning jerk I eased myself, and righted my posture. I protest, I thought myself in a palanquin, and never felt myself so grandly carried. It was a slave under me. There was I, all but my reason. And what is reason? and what is the loss of it? and how often in a day do we do without it, just as well? Reason is only counting, two and two makes four. And if on my passage home, I thought it made five, what matter? Two and two will just make four, as it always did, before I took the finishing glass that did my business. My sister has begged me to write an apology to Mrs. A. and you for disgracing your party; now it does seem to me, that I rather honored your party, for every one that was not drunk (and one or two of the ladies, I am sure, were not) must have been set off greatly in the contrast to me. I was the scapegoat. The soberer they seemed. By the way, is magnesia good on these occasions? *iii pol: med: sum: ante noct: in rub: can.* I am no licentiate, but know enough of simples to beg you to send me a draught after this model. But still you will say (or the men and maids at your house will say) that it is not a seemly sight for an old gentleman to go home pick-a-back. Well, maybe it is not. But I never studied grace. I take it to be a mere superficial accomplish-

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ment. I regard more the internal acquisitions. The great object after supper is to get home, and whether that is obtained in a horizontal posture or perpendicular (as foolish men and apes affect for dignity), I think is little to the purpose. The end is always greater than the means. Here I am, able to compose a sensible rational apology, and what signifies how I got here? I have just sense enough to remember I was very happy last night, and to thank our kind host and hostess, and that's sense enough, I hope.

CHARLES LAMB

N. B.—What is good for a desperate headache? Why, patience, and a determination not to mind being miserable all day long. And that I have made my mind up to. So, here goes. It is better than not being alive at all, which I might have been, had your man toppled me down at Lieut. Barker's coal-shed. My sister sends her sober compliments to Mrs. A. She is not much the worse.—Yours truly,

C. LAMB

[January 30, 1801]

I OUGHT before this to have replied to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your sister I could gang any where; but am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't now care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments, as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen, and customers, coaches, wagons, playhouses; all the bustle and wickedness round Covent Garden; the watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles; life awake, if you are awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print-shops, the old book-stalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes—London itself a pantomime and a masquerade—all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fullness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you; so are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?

My attachments are all local, purely local—I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the

¹ The first half of the letter is here omitted.

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spurious engendering of poetry and books) to groves and valleys. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a bookcase which has followed me about like a faithful dog (only exceeding him in knowledge), wherever I have moved—old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school,—these are my mistresses—have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know that the mind will make friends of anything. Your sun, and moon, and skies, and hills, and lakes, affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof beautifully painted, but unable to satisfy the mind; and, at last, like the pictures of the apartment of a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh and green and warm are all the inventions of men, and assemblies of men in this great city. I should certainly have laughed with dear Joanna.¹

Give my kindest love, and my sister's to D[orothy] and yourself. And a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite.¹ Thank you for liking my play!

C. L. [Charles Lamb]

¹ An allusion to a poem of Wordsworth's.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, *August 22, 1862*

DEAR SIR—I have just read yours of the 19th instant, addressed to myself through the *New York Tribune*. If there be in it any statements or assumptions of fact which I may know to be erroneous, I do not now and here controvert them. If there be in it any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not now and here argue against them. If there be perceptible in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it in deference to an old friend whose heart I have always supposed to be right.

As to the policy I “seem to be pursuing,” as you say, I have not meant to leave anyone in doubt.

I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be “the Union as it was.” If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union, and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more

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whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they appear to be true views.

I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.—Yours,

A. LINCOLN ¹

¹ Following is part of the record of an interview which Dr. John C. Gulliver, president of Knox College, once had with Abraham Lincoln:—

"I want very much to know, Mr. Lincoln, how you got this unusual power of putting things. It must have been a matter of education. No man has it by nature alone. What has your education been?"

"Well, as to education, the newspapers are correct—I never went to school more than six months in my life. But, as you say, this must be a product of culture in some form. I have been putting the question you asked me to myself, while you have been talking. I say this, that among my earliest recollections I remember how, when a mere child, I used to get irritated when anybody talked to me in a way I could not understand. I don't think I ever got angry at anything else in my life. But that always disturbed my temper, and has ever since. I can remember going to my little bedroom, after hearing the neighbors talk of an evening with my father, and spending no small part of the night walking up and down and trying to make out what was the exact meaning of some of their, to me, dark sayings. I could not sleep, though I often tried to, when I got on such a hunt after an idea, until I had caught it, and when I thought I had got it I was not satisfied until I had repeated it over and over, until I had put it in language plain enough as I thought for any boy I knew to comprehend. This was a kind of passion with me, and it has stuck by me, for I am never easy now, when I am handling a thought, till I have bounded it north, and bounded it south, and bounded it east, and bounded it west. Perhaps that accounts for the characteristic you observe in my speeches, though I never put the two things together before."

January 2, 1851

DEAR JOHNSTON—Your request for eighty dollars I do not think it best to comply with now. At the various times when I have helped you a little, you have said to me, “We can get along very well now”; but in a very short time I find you in the same difficulty again. Now, this can only happen by some defect in your conduct. What that defect is, I think I know. You are not lazy, and still you are an idler. I doubt whether, since I saw you, you have done a good whole day’s work in any one day. You do not very much dislike to work, and still you do not work much, merely because it does not seem to you that you could get much for it. This habit of uselessly wasting time is the whole difficulty; it is vastly important to you, and still more so to your children, that you should break the habit. It is more important to them, because they have longer to live, and can keep out of an idle habit before they are in it, easier than they can get out after they are in.

You are now in need of some money; and what I propose is, that you shall go to work, “tooth and nail,” for somebody who will give you money for it. Let father and your boys take charge of your things at home, prepare for a crop, and make the crop, and you go to work for the best money wages, or in discharge of any debt you owe, that you can get; and, to secure you a fair reward for your labor, I now promise you, that for every dollar you will, between this and the first of May, get for your own labor, either in money or as your own indebtedness, I will then give you one other dollar. By this,

¹ From the *Complete Works* of Abraham Lincoln. Reprinted with the permission of The Century Co.

LETTERS

if you hire yourself at ten dollars a month, from me you will get ten more, making twenty dollars a month for your work. In this I do not mean you shall go off to St. Louis, or the lead mines, or the gold mines in California, but I mean for you to go at it for the best wages you can get close to home in Coles County. Now, if you will do this, you will be soon out of debt, and, what is better, you will have a habit that will keep you from getting in debt again. But, if I should now clear you out of debt, next year you would be just as deep in as ever. You say you would almost give your place in heaven for seventy or eighty dollars. Then you value your place in heaven very cheap, for I am sure you can, with the offer I make, get the seventy or eighty dollars for four or five months' work. You say if I will furnish you the money you will deed me the land, and, if you don't pay the money back, you will deliver possession. Nonsense! If you can't now live with the land, how will you then live without it? You have always been kind to me, and I do not mean to be unkind to you. On the contrary, if you will but follow my advice, you will find it worth more than eighty times eighty dollars to you.—Affectionately your brother,

A. LINCOLN

FOLKESTONE, *September*36 ONSLOW SQUARE, *October*

MY DEAR OLD ALFRED—I owe you a letter of happiness and thanks. Sir, about three weeks ago, when I was ill in bed, I read the “*Idylls of the King*,” and I thought, “Oh I must write to him now, for this pleasure, this delight, this splendor of happiness which I have been enjoying.” But I should have blotted the sheets, ’tis ill writing on one’s back. The letter full of gratitude never went as far as the post-office and how comes it now?

D’abord,² a bottle of claret. (The landlord of the hotel asked me down to the cellar and treated me.) Then afterwards sitting here, an old magazine, *Fraser’s Magazine*, 1850, and I come on a poem out of “The Princess” which says “I hear the horns of Elfland blowing blowing,” no, it’s “the horns of Elfland faintly blowing” (I have been into my bedroom to fetch my pen and it has made that blot), and, reading these lines, which only one man in the world could write, I thought about the other horns of Elfland blowing in full strength, and Arthur in gold armor, and Guinevere in gold hair, and all those knights and heroes and beauties and purple landscapes and misty gray lakes in which you have made me live. They seem like facts to me, since about three weeks ago (three weeks or a month was it?) when I read the book. It is on the table yonder, and I don’t like, somehow, to disturb it, but the delight and gratitude! You have made me as happy as I was as a child with the *Arabian Nights*, every step I have walked in

¹ From the *Memoir* of Tennyson, by his son. Reprinted with the permission of Macmillan & Co., Ltd.

² First.

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Elfland has been a sort of Paradise to me. (The landlord gave *two* bottles of his claret and I think I drank the most) and here I have been lying back in the chair and thinking of those delightful "Idylls," my thoughts being turned to you: what could I do but be grateful to that surprising genius which has made me so happy? Do you understand that what I mean is all true and that I should break out were you sitting opposite with a pipe in your mouth? Gold and purple and diamonds, I say, gentlemen and glory and love and honor, and if you haven't given me all these why should I be in such an ardor of gratitude? But I have had out of that dear book the greatest delight that has ever come to me since I was a young man; to write and think about it makes me almost young, and this I suppose is what I'm doing, like an after-dinner speech. . . .
—Always yours, my dear Alfred,

W. M. THACKERAY

34 DE VERE GARDENS, W., *July 31st, 1888*

MY DEAR LOUIS—You are too far away—you are too absent—too invisible, inaudible, inconceivable. Life is too short a business and friendship too delicate a matter for such tricks—for cutting great gory masses out of 'em by the year at a time. Therefore come back. Hang it all—sink it all and come back. A little more and I shall cease to believe in you: I don't mean (in the usual implied phrase) in your veracity, but literally and more fatally in your relevancy—your objective reality. You have become a beautiful myth—a kind of unnatural uncomfortable unburied *mort*.² You put forth a beautiful monthly voice, with such happy notes in it—but it comes from too far away, from the other side of the globe, while I vaguely know that you are crawling like a fly on the nether surface of my chair. Your adventures, no doubt, are wonderful; but I don't successfully evoke them, understand them, believe in them. I do in those you write, heaven knows—but I don't in those you perform, though the latter, I know, are to lead to new revelations of the former and your capacity for them is certainly wonderful enough. This is a selfish personal cry: I wish you back; for literature is lonely and Bournemouth is barren without you. Your place in my affection has not been usurped by another—for there is not the least little scrap of another to usurp it. If there were I would perversely try to care for him. But there isn't—I repeat, and I literally care for nothing but your return. I haven't even your novel to stay my stomach withal. The wan wet month elapse and I see no sign of it. The beautiful portrait of you

¹ Reprinted through special arrangement with Charles Scribner's Sons.

² Corpse.

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wife shimmers at me from my chimney-piece—brought some months ago by the natural McClure—but seems to refer to one as dim and distant and delightful as a “toast” of the last century. I wish I could make you homesick—I wish I could spoil your fun. It is a very featureless time. The summer is rank with rheumatism—a dark, drowned, unprecedented season. The town is empty but I am not going away. I have no money, but I have a little work. I have lately written several short fictions—but you may not see them unless you come home. I have just begun a novel¹ which is to run through the *Atlantic* from January 1st and which I aspire to finish by the end of this year. In reality I suppose I shall not be fully delivered of it before the middle of next. After that, with God’s help, I propose, for a longish period, to do nothing but short lengths. I want to leave a multitude of pictures of my time, projecting my small circular frame upon as many different spots as possible and going in for number as well as quality, so that the number may constitute a total having a certain value as observation and testimony. But there isn’t so much as a creature here even to whisper such an intention to. Nothing lifts its hand in these islands save blackguard party politics. Criticism is of an abject density and puerility—it doesn’t exist—it writes the intellect of our race too low. Lang,² in the D. N.,³ every morning, and I believe in a hundred other places, uses his beautiful thin facility to write everything down to the lowest level of Philistine twaddle—the view of the old lady round the corner or the clever person at the dinner party. The incorporated society of authors (I belong to it, and so do you, I think, but I don’t know what it is) gave a dinner the other night to American literati to thank them for praying for international copyright. I carefully forbore to go, thinking the

¹ *The Tragic Muse*.

² Andrew Lang. Part of an imaginary letter of his—to Thackeray—is reprinted below, p. 692.

³ *Daily News*.

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gratulation premature, and I see by this morning's *Times* that the banqueted boon is further off than ever. Edmund Gosse has sent me his clever little life of Congreve, just out, and I have read it—but it isn't so good as his Raleigh. But no more was the insufferable subject. . . . Come, my dear Louis, grow not too thin. I can't question you—because, as I say, I don't conjure you up. You have killed the imagination in me—that part of it which formed your element and in which you sat vivid and near. Your wife and mother and Mr. Lloyd suffer also—I must confess it—by this failure of breath, of faith. Of course I have your letter—from Manasquan (is that the idiotic name?) of the—ingenuous me, to think there was a date! It was terribly impersonal—it did me little good. A little more and I shan't believe in you enough to bless you. Take this, therefore, as your last chance. I follow all with an aching wing, an inadequate geography, and an ineradicable hope. Ever, my dear Louis, yours, to the last snub—

HENRY JAMES

HONOLULU [March, 1889]

MY DEAR JAMES—Yes—I own up—I am untrue to friendship and (what is less, but still considerable) to civilization. I am not coming home for another year. There it is, cold and bald, and now you won't believe in me at all, and serve me right (says you) and the devil take me. But look here, and judge me tenderly. I have had more fun and pleasure of my life these past months than ever before, and more health than any time in ten long years. And even here in Honolulu I have withered in the cold; and this precious deep is filled with islands, which we may still visit; and though the sea is a deathful place, I like to be there, and like squalls (when they are over); and to draw near to a new island, I cannot say how much I like. In short, I take another year of this sort of life, and mean to try to work down among the poisoned arrows, and mean (if it may be) to come back again when the thing is through, and converse with Henry James as heretofore; and in the meanwhile issue directions to H. J. to write to me once more. Let him address here at Honolulu, for my views are vague; and if it is sent here it will follow and find me, if I am to be found; and if I am not to be found, the man James will have done his duty, and we shall be at the bottom of the sea, where no post-office clerk can be expected to discover us, or languishing on a coral island, the philosophic drudges of some barbarian potentate: perchance, of an American missionary. My wife has just sent to Mrs. Sitwell a translation (*tant bien que mal*²) of a letter I have had from my chief friend in this part of the world: go and see her, and get a hearing of it;

¹ Reprinted through special arrangement with Charles Scribner's Sons² Indifferently well done.

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it will do you good; it is a better method of correspondence than even Henry James's.¹ I jest, but seriously it is a strange thing for a tough, sick middle-aged scrivener like R. L. S. to receive a letter so conceived from a man fifty years old, a leading politician, a crack orator, and the great wit of his village, boldly say, "the highly popular M. P.² of Tautira." My nineteenth century strikes here, and lies alongside of something beautiful and ancient. I think the receipt of such a letter might humble, shall I say even——? and for me, I would rather have received it than written "Redgauntlet" or the "Sixth Æneid." All told, if my books have enabled or helped me to make this voyage, to know Rui, and to have received such a letter, they have (in the old prefatorial expression) not been writ in vain. It would seem from this that I have been not so much humbled as puffed up; but, I assure you, I have in fact been both. A little of what that letter says is my own earning; not all, but yet a little; and the little makes me proud, and all the rest ashamed; and in the contrast, how much more beautiful altogether is the ancient man than him of to-day!

Well, well, Henry James is pretty good, though he *is* of the nineteenth century, and that glaringly. And to curry favor with him, I wish I could be more explicit; but, indeed, I am still of necessity extremely vague, and cannot tell what I am to do, nor where I am to go for some while yet. As soon as I am sure, you shall hear. All are fairly well—the wife your countrywoman, least of all; troubles are not entirely wanting; but on the whole we prosper, and we are all affectionately yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

¹ The letter in question, translated presumably by Stevenson himself, is reprinted on the following pages.

² Member of Parliament.

I MAKE you to know my great affection. At the hour when you left us, I was filled with tears; my wife, Rui Telime, also, and all of my household. When you embarked I felt a great sorrow. It is for this that I went upon the road, and you looked from that ship, and I looked at you on the ship with great grief until you had raised the anchor and hoisted the sails. When the ship started I ran along the beach to see you still; and when you were on the open sea I cried out to you, "Farewell, Louis"; and when I was coming back to my house I seemed to hear your voice crying, "Rui, farewell." Afterwards I watched the ship as long as I could until the night fell: and when it was dark I said to myself, "If I had wings I should fly to the ship to meet you, and to sleep amongst you, so that I might be able to come back to shore and to tell Rui Telime, 'I have slept upon the ship of Teriitera.'" After that we passed that night in the impatience of grief. Towards eight o'clock I seemed to hear your voice, "Teriitera—Rui—here is the hour for *putter* and *tiro*" [cheese and syrup]. I did not sleep that night, thinking continually of you, my very dear friend, until the morning; being then still awake, I went to see Tapina Tutu on her bed, and alas, she was not there. Afterwards I looked into your rooms; they did not please me as they used to do. I did not hear your voice saying, "Hail Rui"; I thought then that you had gone, and that you had left me. Rising up, I went to the beach to see your ship, and I could not see it. I wept, then, until the night, telling myself continually, "Teriitera returns into his own country and leaves his dear Rui in grief, so that I suffer for him, and weep

¹ See the preceding letter.—Reprinted through special arrangement with Charles Scribner's Sons.

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for him." I will not forget you in my memory. Here is the thought: I desire to meet you again. It is my dear Teriitera makes the only riches I desire in this world. It is your eyes that I desire to see again. It must be that your body and my body shall eat together at one table: there is what would make my heart content. But now we are separated. May God be with you all. May His word and His mercy go with you, so that you may be well and we also, according to the words of Paul.

ORI A ORI, THAT IS TO SAY, RUI

60 TO LUCIEN ANATOLE PRÉVOST-PARADOL¹

March 20, 1849

MY DEAR PRÉVOST—It is indeed for me to apologize! I ought to have answered you a week ago, and I have not been able to do so, having, like you, an accumulation of work of all kinds that I cannot get through. First, there are all the regular, official papers on Greek, Philosophy, History, Latin, and French; then preparation for my Licentiate, and the reading up of thirty or forty difficult authors that we shall have to discourse about; lastly, all my private studies in Literature, History, and Philosophy. All this is going on at once, and I always have a quantity of things in hand; I have drawn up a big plan of study, and I intend to work out a great part of it during these three years at the École; I shall complete it later on. I mean to be a philosopher; and, now that you understand the full sense of the word, you can see what a series of reflections and what a mass of knowledge are necessary to me. If I only wished to pass an examination or to accept a professorship, I should not need to take much trouble; it would be sufficient to have a certain amount of reading and a strict adherence to doctrine, together with a complete ignorance of Modern Science and Philosophy. But, as I would rather drown myself than be reduced to mere potboiling—as I am studying for the sake of knowledge, and not merely in order to earn my living—I want my instruction to be complete. I am thus thrown into all kinds of research, and shall be obliged,

¹ From the *Life and Letters of H. Taine*, translated from the French by Mrs. R. L. Devonshire. Reprinted with the permission of Constable and Company, Limited.—At the time of writing this letter Taine was not yet twenty-one years old.

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when I leave the École, to study Social Science, Political Economy, and Physical Science. Life is long—this is the use I shall make of it; but my private cogitations take up most of my time; one must seek in order to understand—in order to believe in Philosophy one must go through it all for oneself, and repeat the same discoveries that others have made before you. You know this by experience, and if you are now adrift on your unfortunate skepticism, it is because you have looked upon philosophers as advocates or comedians; as they all have great genius, they reason forcibly and convincingly, and present to you beautiful and poetical opinions. Hence you have admitted the most contrary systems, just as, when listening disinterestedly to rival speakers of great eloquence, we are swayed by each of them in turn and end by believing in neither. But, believe me, I would rather have your coldness, your disgust, your skepticism, and your ambition than your former blind, unreasoning, passionate, and inflexible convictions; the result will be that you will not take life seriously, and that you will make it sweeter and more agreeable, until the day will come when you will tire of this floating and uncertain state, and will decide to seek for firm ground, and rest on it at last.

And let me tell you, you are nearer to me now than before the property of Thought is to pacify the mind, and, by elevating it, to bestow on it Equanimity. That is what has befallen me; like you, I have acquired great contempt for mankind, whilst preserving a great admiration for human nature. I consider men ridiculous, impotent, and passionate like children, stupid and vain, and especially silly in being full of prejudices. Whilst preserving the outward forms of politeness, I laugh to myself to see how ugly and idiotic they are. Is not that what you felt last year? You used to tell me so and I did not listen to you, for I was lost in the contempla-

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tion of Man in himself. I am now where you are, but I have kept my former opinions on human nature and my deep love for a thing so beautiful, so vast. These two feelings are by no means irreconcilable, for it is one more reason for looking down on men to see that, with such a perfect essence, they only succeed in being fools, frenzied lunatics, or knaves.

It follows that my love, drawing back from particular objects, tends towards general or ideal things, such as works of Art, Humanity as a whole, and especially Nature. I felt this more strongly yesterday than I have ever done. I was at the Jardin des Plantes, in a deserted corner, and I was gazing at a slope covered with young wild grasses in bloom; the sun shone through them, and I could see the inner life circulating in the slight tissues and raising the strong stalks; the wind blew and swayed all that harvest of thick growing blades, of a marvelous beauty and transparency. I felt my heart beating, and my whole soul throbbing with love for that great, strange, and beautiful Being which we call Nature. I loved her, I love her now, I felt and saw her everywhere: in the luminous sky, in the pure air, in that forest of living animated plants, and especially in the quick and uncertain breath of the spring breezes. Oh! why was I not away from dusty Paris, away in the free and lonely country! Why do I love Nature so? Why, when I see her, am I moved like a lover in the presence of his mistress? Why am I filled with a calm and perfect joy? Are Nature and Man but one thing? Do they, at certain moments, return to the primitive and absolute unity from which, alas for them! they have departed? For my part, I think Nature more beautiful than Woman; the rosy tints of the morning sky seem to me more delicate than the lovely coloring of the fairest cheek; the ripples of water running over rocks and weeds are to me as expressive as the changes of the most mobile countenance. What more shall

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I tell you? When I perceive a whole landscape, with its rivers, its woods, its hills and dales, its sounds and colorings, I feel the presence of a Being absolutely One and real; all that is One, and this infinite and accessible grandeur is the Supreme Beauty. There are some barbarians who see in all this but a spectacle, a phantasmagoria which God displays to amuse Mankind, a composite of matter and movement without forces of its own, without veritable reality—and they call themselves artists!!

Seriously, my dear fellow, can you live a political life, or what is called real life, when you have such thoughts before you? Can you love with your *whole* soul anything but those perfect things which Science and inward Thought reveal to us? And do you feel that, when we give this love to a finite and real creature, we only give it in fancy, imagining that that being is perfect, and clothing it with all the excellence which we see in the Divine model? I do not know if the same process takes place in you as in me, but I confess that the infinite love which, like all men, I carry in the bottom of my heart, always finds itself arrested in its flight when directed towards finite realizations of the perfect Essence; I know not what unfortunate perspicacity shows me that they lack this or that, and that they therefore cannot become in every point an object of love; I say the same of myself, and I feel that I, too, do not deserve to be completely loved.

I am confessing to you a crowd of thoughts and feelings that I should not dare tell anyone else lest I be considered crazy. But with you I dare everything; tell me whether I am keeping within the bounds, not of common sense (I know I am not, and it does not afflict), but within those of good sense (which is more serious). You are more capable than another of judging, since you do not believe in Philosophy, and can look upon it without being dazzled. Besides, all this

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is explained in the chain of my doctrines, and one day, if you like, I will explain to you the meaning of the sort of practical Pantheism which I have set down in this letter.

Good-by, take care of yourself, and write to me as long a letter as I have written to you.

[HIPPOLYTE TAINÉ]

61 TO WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY¹

(Imaginary letter by Andrew Lang)

SIR—You, above all others, were and remain without a rival in your many-sided excellence, and praise of you strikes at none of those who have survived your day. The increase of time only mellows your renown, and each year that passes and brings you no successor does but sharpen the keenness of our sense of loss. In what other novelist, since Scott was worn down by the burden of a forlorn endeavor, and died for honor's sake, has the world found so many of the fairest gifts combined? If we may not call you a poet (for the first of English writers of light verse did not seek that crown), who that was less than a poet ever saw life with a glance so keen as yours, so steady, and so sane? Your pathos was never cheap; your laughter never forced; your sigh was never the pulpit trick of the preacher. Your funny people—your Costigans and Fokers—were not mere characters of trick and catchword, were not empty comic masks. Behind each the human heart was beating; and ever and again we were allowed to see the features of the man.

That the creator of Colonel Newcome and of Henry Esmond was a snarling cynic; that he who designed Rache Esmond could not draw a good woman: these are the chief charges (all indifferent now to you, who were once so sensitive) that your admirers have to contend against. A French critic, M. Taine, also protests that you do preach too much. Did any author but yourself so frequently break the thread (seldom a strong thread) of his plot to converse with his reader and moralize his tale, we also might be offended. But

¹ Abridged. Reprinted from *Letters to Dead Authors* through special arrangement with Charles Scribner's Sons.

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who that loves Montaigne and Pascal, who that likes the wise trifling of the one and can bear with the melancholy of the other, but prefers your preaching to another's playing!

Your thoughts come in, like the intervention of the Greek chorus, as an ornament and source of fresh delight. Like the songs of the chorus, they bid us pause a moment over the wider laws and actions of human fate and human life, and we turn from your persons to yourself, and again from yourself to your persons, as from the odes of Sophocles or Aristophanes to the action of their characters on the stage. Nor, to my taste, does the mere music and melancholy dignity of your style in these passages of meditation fall far below the highest efforts of poetry. I remember that scene where Clive, at Barnes Newcome's Lecture on the Poetry of the Affections, sees Ethel who is lost to him. "And the past and its dear histories, and youth and its hopes and passions, and tones and looks forever echoing in the heart and present in the memory—these, no doubt, poor Clive saw and heard as he looked across the great gulf of time, and parting and grief, and beheld the woman he had loved for many years."

Forever echoing in the heart and present in the memory: who has not heard these tones, who does not hear them as he turns over your books that, for so many years, have been his companions and comforters? We have been young and old, we have been sad and merry with you, we have listened to the midnight chimes with Pen and Warrington, have stood with you beside the death-bed, have mourned at that yet more awful funeral of lost love, and with you have prayed in the inmost chapel sacred to our old and immortal affections, *à léal souvenir!*¹ And whenever you speak for yourself, and speak in earnest, how magical, how rare, how lonely in our literature is the beauty of your sentences! "I can't express the charm of them" (so you write of George Sand; so we

¹ In loyal remembrance of them.

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may write of you): "they seem to me like the sound of country bells, provoking I don't know what vein of music and meditation, and falling sweetly and sadly on the ear." Surely that style, so fresh, so rich, so full of surprise—that style which stamps as classical your fragments of slang, and perpetually astonishes and delights—would alone give immortality to an author, even had he little to say. But you, with your whole wide world of fops and fools, of good women and brave men, of honest absurdities and cheery adventures: you who created the Steynes and Newcomes, the Beckys and Blanches, Captain Costigan and F. B., and the Chevalier Strong—all that host of friends imperishable—you must survive with Shakespeare and Cervantes in the memory and affection of men.

(Imaginary letter by Walter Savage Landor)

IT is right and orderly, that he who has partaken so largely in the prosperity of the Athenians, should close the procession of their calamities. The fever that has depopulated our city, returned upon me last night, and Hippocrates and Acron tell me that my end is near.

When we agreed, O Aspasia! in the beginning of our loves, to communicate our thoughts by writing, even while we were both in Athens, and when we had many reasons for it, we little foresaw the more powerful one that has rendered it necessary of late.¹ We never can meet again: the laws forbid it, and love itself enforces them. Let wisdom be heard by you as imperturbably, and affection as authoritatively, as ever; and remember that the sorrow of Pericles can arise but from the bosom of Aspasia. There is only one word of tenderness we could say, which we have not said oftentimes before; and there is no consolation in it. The happy never say, and never hear said, farewell.

Reviewing the course of my life, it appears to me at one moment as if we met but yesterday; at another as if centuries had passed within it; for within it have existed the greater part of those who, since the origin of the world, have been the luminaries of the human race. Damon called me from my music to look at Aristides on his way to exile; and my father pressed the wrist by which he was leading me along, and whispered in my ear:

“Walk quickly by; glance cautiously; it is there Miltiades is in prison.”

¹ The allusion is to the plague which had been raging in Athens and to which Pericles is now succumbing.

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In my boyhood Pindar took me up in his arms, when he brought to our house the dirge he had composed for the funeral of my grandfather; in my adolescence I offered the rites of hospitality to Empedocles; not long afterwards I embraced the neck of Æschylus, about to abandon his country. With Sophocles I have argued on eloquence; with Euripides on policy and ethics; I have discoursed, as became an inquirer, with Protagoras and Democritus, with Anaxagoras and Meton. From Herodotus I have listened to the most instructive history, conveyed in a language the most copious and the most harmonious; a man worthy to carry away the collected suffrages of universal Greece; a man worthy to throw open the temples of Egypt, and to celebrate the exploits of Cyrus. And from Thucydides, who alone can succeed to him, how recently did my Aspasia hear with me the energetic praises of his just supremacy!

As if the festival of life were incomplete, and wanted one great ornament to crown it, Phidias placed before us, in ivory and gold, the tutelary deity of this land, and the Zeus of Homer and Olympus.

To have lived with such men, to have enjoyed their familiarity and esteem, overpays all labors and anxieties. I were unworthy of the friendships I have commemorated, were I forgetful of the latest. Sacred it ought to be, formed as it was under the portico of Death, my friendship with the most sagacious, the most scientific, the most beneficent of philosophers, Acron and Hippocrates. If mortal could war against Pestilence and Destiny, they had been victorious. I leave them in the field: unfortunate he who finds them among the fallen!

And now, at the close of my day, when every light is dim and every guest departed, let me own that these wane before me, remembering, as I do in the pride and fullness of my

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heart, that Athens confided her glory, and Aspasia her happiness, to me.

Have I been a faithful guardian? Do I resign them to the custody of the gods undiminished and unimpaired? Welcome then, welcome, my last hour! After enjoying for so great a number of years, in my public and my private life, what I believe has never been the lot of any other, I now extend my hand to the urn, and take without reluctance or hesitation what is the lot of all.



VI
DESCRIPTIVE PIECES

*I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there . . .*

—SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE



Thomas Babington Macaulay

WARREN HASTINGS was a notable figure in the history of British rule in the Far East. Three years after he had resigned the office of governor-general of India he was impeached of "high crimes and misdemeanors." The House of Commons brought the charge; the House of Lords sat in judgment. The trial opened on February 13, 1788.

There have been spectacles more dazzling to the eye, more gorgeous with jewelry and cloth of gold, more attractive to grown-up children, than that which was then exhibited at Westminster; but, perhaps, there never was a spectacle so well calculated to strike a highly cultivated, a reflecting, an imaginative mind. All the various kinds of interest which belong to the near and to the distant, to the present and to the past, were collected on one spot and in one hour. All the talents and all the accomplishments which are developed by liberty and civilization were now displayed, with every advantage that could be derived both from co-operation and from contrast. Every step in the proceedings carried the mind either backward, through many troubled centuries, to the days when the foundations of our constitution were laid; or far away, over boundless seas and deserts, to dusky nations living under strange stars, worshipping strange gods, and writing strange characters from right to left. The High Court of Parliament was to sit, according to forms handed down from the days of the Plantagenets, on an Eng-

¹ From the essay on Warren Hastings.

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lishman accused of exercising tyranny over the lord of the holy city of Benares, and over the ladies of the princely house of Oude.

The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great hall of William Rufus, the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings, the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon and the just absolution of Somers, the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment, the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame. Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were lined with grenadiers. The streets were kept clear by cavalry. The peers, robed in gold and ermine, were marshalled by the heralds under Garter King-at-arms. The judges in their vestments of state attended to give advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy lords, three fourths of the Upper House as the Upper House then was, walked in solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the tribunal. The junior Baron present led the way. George Eliott, Lord Heathfield, recently ennobled for his memorable defence of Gibraltar against the fleets and armies of France and Spain. The long procession was closed by the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal of the realm, by the great dignitaries and by the brothers and sons of the King. Last of all came the Prince of Wales, conspicuous by his fine person and noble bearing. The gray old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by an audience such as has rarely excited the fears or the emulations of an orator. There were gathered together, from all parts of a great, free, enlightened and prosperous empire, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated round the Queen the fair-haired young daughters of the house of Brunswick. There the Ambassador

of great Kings and Commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire¹ thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres, and when, before a senate which still retained some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa. There were seen side by side the greatest painter and the greatest scholar of the age. The spectacle had allured Reynolds from that easel which has preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labors in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition, a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious and inelegant ostentation, but still precious, massive, and splendid. There appeared the voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret plighted his faith. There too was she, the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the Saint Cecilia whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has rescued from the common decay.² There were the members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticized, and exchanged repartees, under the rich peacock-hangings of Mrs. Montague. And there the ladies whose lips, more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried the Westminster election against palace and treasury, shone round Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire.

The Serjeants made proclamation. Hastings advanced to the bar, and bent his knee. The culprit was indeed not unworthy of that great presence. He had ruled an extensive and populous country, had made laws and treaties, had sent forth armies, had

¹ Edward Gibbon.

² Mrs. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, wife of the orator mentioned below. She was painted as Saint Cecilia by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

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set up and pulled down princes. And in his high place he had so borne himself, that all had feared him, that most had loved him, and that hatred itself could deny him no title to glory, except virtue. He looked like a great man, and not like a bad man. A person small and emaciated, yet deriving dignity from a carriage which, while it indicated deference to the court, indicated also habitual self-possession and self-respect, a high and intellectual forehead, a brow pensive, but not gloomy, a mouth of inflexible decision, a face pale and worn, but serene, on which was written, as legibly as under the picture in the council-chamber at Calcutta, *Mens æqua in arduis*; ¹ such was the aspect with which the great Proconsul presented himself to his judges.

His counsel accompanied him, men all of whom were afterwards raised by their talents and learning to the highest posts in their profession, the bold and strong-minded Law, afterwards Chief Justice of the King's Bench; the more humane and eloquent Dallas, afterwards Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; and Plomer who, near twenty years later, successfully conducted in the same high court the defence of Lord Melville, and subsequently became Vice-chancellor and Master of the Rolls.

But neither the culprit nor his advocates attracted so much notice as the accusers. In the midst of the blaze of red drapery a space had been fitted up with green benches and tables for the Commons. The managers, with Burke at their head, appeared in full dress. The collectors of gossip did not fail to remark that even Fox, generally so regardless of his appearance, had paid to the illustrious tribunal the compliment of wearing a bag and sword. Pitt had refused to be one of the conductors of the impeachment; and his commanding, copious, and sonorous eloquence was wanting to that great muster of various talents. Age and blindness had unfitted Lord North for the duties of a public prosecutor; and his friends were left without

¹ A mind firm amid difficulties.

the help of his excellent sense, his tact, and his urbanity. But, in spite of the absence of these two distinguished members of the Lower House, the box in which the managers stood contained an array of speakers such as perhaps had not appeared together since the great age of Athenian eloquence. There were Fox and Sheridan, the English Demosthenes and the English Hyperides. There was Burke, ignorant, indeed, or negligent of the art of adapting his reasonings and his style to the capacity and taste of his hearers, but in amplitude of comprehension and richness of imagination superior to every orator, ancient or modern. There, with eyes reverentially fixed on Burke, appeared the finest gentleman of the age, his form developed by every manly exercise, his face beaming with intelligence and spirit, the ingenious, the chivalrous, the high-souled Windham. Nor, though surrounded by such men, did the youngest manager pass unnoticed. At an age when most of those who distinguish themselves in life are still contending for prizes and fellowships at college, he had won for himself a conspicuous place in Parliament. No advantage of fortune or connection was wanting that could set off to the height his splendid talents and his unblemished honor. At twenty-three he had been thought worthy to be ranked with the veteran statesmen who appeared as the delegates of the British Commons, at the bar of the British nobility. All who stood at that bar, save him alone, are gone, culprit, advocates, accusers. To the generation which is now in the vigor of life, he is the sole representative of a great age which has passed away. But those who, within the last ten years, have listened with delight, till the morning sun shone on the tapestries of the House of Lords, to the lofty and animated eloquence of Charles, Earl Grey, are able to form some estimate of the powers of a race of men among whom he was not the foremost.

The charges and the answers of Hastings were first read. The ceremony occupied two whole days, and was rendered less

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tedious than it would otherwise have been by the silver voice and just emphasis of Cowper, the clerk of the court, a near relation of the amiable poet. On the third day Burke rose. Four sittings were occupied by his opening speech, which was intended to be a general introduction to all the charges. With an exuberance of thought and a splendor of diction which more than satisfied the highly raised expectation of the audience, he described the character and institutions of the natives of India, recounted the circumstances in which the Asiatic empire of Britain had originated, and set forth the constitution of the Company¹ and of the English presidencies. Having thus attempted to communicate to his hearers an idea of Eastern society, as vivid as that which existed in his own mind, he proceeded to arraign the administration of Hastings as systematically conducted in defiance of morality and public law. The energy and pathos of the great orator extorted expressions of unwonted admiration from the stern and hostile Chancellor, and, for a moment, seemed to pierce even the resolute heart of the defendant. The ladies in the galleries, unaccustomed to such displays of eloquence, excited by the solemnity of the occasion, and perhaps not unwilling to display their taste and sensibility, were in a state of uncontrollable emotion. Handkerchiefs were pulled out; smelling-bottles were handed round; hysterical sobs and screams were heard: and Mrs. Sheridan was carried out in a fit. At length the orator concluded. Raising his voice till the old arches of Irish oak resounded, "Therefore," said he, "hath it with all confidence been ordered, by the Commons of Great Britain, that I impeach Warren Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanors. I impeach him in the name of the Commons' House of Parliament, whose trust he has betrayed. I impeach him in the name of the English nation whose ancient honor he has sullied. I impeach him in the

¹ The East India Company, through whose commercial enterprise England had acquired control over India.

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name of the people of India, whose rights he has trodden under foot, and whose country he has turned into a desert. Lastly, in the name of human nature itself, in the name of both sexes, in the name of every age, in the name of every rank, I impeach the common enemy and oppressor of all!"

Thomas De Quincey

DE QUINCEY, while still a mere schoolboy, runs away to London, and becomes presently a penniless wanderer in the streets. In his dire need he is succored by the Ann of the Confessions—a girl little older than himself, and in far worse plight; for she is an irredeemable victim at once of the hard usage of the wicked and the harsh judgments of the virtuous. This strange friendship is after many months interrupted by a journey of De Quincey to the country. On his return Ann is missing from the appointed meeting-place, and night after night he paces “the endless terraces of Oxford Street” in futile search of her. She remains thenceforth only a haunting and tragic memory. In after years, led by imprudent medication into the opium habit, De Quincey finds her a recurring figure in the weird fantasies of his narcotic dreams.

May 1818.—I know not whether others share in my feelings on this point; but I have often thought that if I were compelled to forego England, and to live in China, among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery, I should go mad. The causes of my horror lie deep, and some of them must be common to others. Southern Asia, in general, is the seat of awful images and associations. As the cradle of the human race, if on no other ground, it would have a dim,

¹ From *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*.

reverential feeling connected with it. But there are other reasons. No man can pretend that the wild, barbarous, and capricious superstitions of Africa, or of savage tribes elsewhere, affect him in the way that he is affected by the ancient, monumental, cruel, and elaborate religions of Hindostan. The mere antiquity of Asiatic things, of their institutions, histories, above all, of their mythologies, &c., is so impressive, that to me the vast age of the race and name overpowers the sense of youth in the individual. A young Chinese seems to me an antediluvian man renewed. Even Englishmen, though not bred in any knowledge of such institutions, cannot but shudder at the mystic sublimity of *castes* that have flowed apart, and refused to mix, through such immemorial tracts of time; nor can any man fail to be awed by the sanctity of the Ganges, or by the very name of the Euphrates. It contributes much to these feelings that Southeastern Asia is, and has been for thousands of years, the part of the earth most swarming with human life, the great *officina gentium*.¹ Man is a weed in those regions. The vast empires, also, into which the enormous population of Asia has always been cast, give a further sublimity to the feelings associated with all Oriental names or images. In China, over and above what it has in common with the rest of southern Asia, I am terrified by the modes of life, by the manners, by the barrier of utter abhorrence placed between myself and *them*, by counter-sympathies deeper than I can analyze. I could sooner live with lunatics, with vermin, with crocodiles or snakes. All this, and much more than I can say, the reader must enter into before he can comprehend the unimaginable horror which these dreams of Oriental imagery and mythological tortures impressed upon me. Under the connecting feeling of tropical heat and vertical sunlights, I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and plants, usages and appearances, that are found in all tropical regions,

¹ Mother of races.

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and assembled them together in China or Hindostan. From kindred feelings, I soon brought Egypt and her gods under the same law. I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas and was fixed for centuries at the summit, or in secret rooms. I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hated me; Seeva lay in wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris: I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. Thousands of years I lived and was buried in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses by crocodiles; and was laid, confounded with all unutterable abortions, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud.

Some slight abstraction I thus attempt of my Oriental dreams, which filled me always with such amazement at the monstrous scenery, that horror seemed absorbed for a while in sheer astonishment. Sooner or later came a reflux of feeling that swallowed up the astonishment, and left me, not so much in terror, as in hatred and abomination of what I saw. Over every form, and threat, and punishment, and dim sightless incarceration, brooded a killing sense of eternity and infinity. Into these dreams only it was, with one or two slight exceptions, that any circumstances of physical horror entered. All before had been moral and spiritual terrors. But here the main agents were ugly birds, or snakes, or crocodiles, especially the last. The cursed crocodile became to me the object of more horror than all the rest. I was compelled to live with him; and (as was always the case in my dreams) for centuries. Sometimes I escaped, and found myself in Chinese houses. All the feet of the tables, sofas, &c., soon became instinct with life: the abominable head of the crocodile, and his leering eyes, looked out at me, multiplied into ten thousand repetitions.

tions; and I stood loathing and fascinated. So often did this hideous reptile haunt my dreams, that many times the very same dream was broken up in the very same way: I heard gentle voices speaking to me (I hear everything when I am sleeping), and instantly I awoke; it was broad noon, and my children were standing, hand in hand, at my bedside, come to show me their colored shoes, or new frocks, or to let me see them dressed for going out. No experience was so awful to me, and at the same time so pathetic, as this abrupt translation from the darkness of the infinite to the gaudy summer air of highest noon, and from the unutterable abortions of miscreated gigantic vermin to the sight of infancy, and innocent *human* natures.

June 1819.—I have had occasion to remark, at various periods of my life, that the deaths of those whom we love, and, indeed, the contemplation of death generally, is (*ceteris paribus*¹) more affecting in summer than in any other season of the year. And the reasons are these three, I think: first, that the visible heavens in summer appear far higher, more distant, and (if such a solecism may be excused) more infinite; the clouds by which chiefly the eye expounds the distance of the blue pavilion stretched over our heads are in summer more voluminous, more massed, and are accumulated in far grander and more towering piles; secondly, the light and the appearances of the declining and the setting sun are much more fitted to be types and characters of the infinite; and, thirdly (which is the main reason), the exuberant and riotous prodigality of life naturally forces the mind more powerfully upon the antagonist thought of death, and the wintry sterility of the grave. For it may be observed generally, that wherever two thoughts stand related to each other by a law of antagonism, and exist, as it were, by mutual repulsion, they are apt to suggest each other. On these accounts it is that I find it in-

¹ Other things being equal.

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possible to banish the thought of death when I am walking alone in the endless days of summer; and any particular death, if not actually more affecting, at least haunts my mind more obstinately and besiegingly, in that season. Perhaps this cause and a slight incident which I omit, might have been the immediate occasions of the following dream, to which, however, a predisposition must always have existed in my mind; but, having been once roused, it never left me, and split into a thousand fantastic variations, which often suddenly recombined, locked back into startling unity, and restored the original dream.

I thought that it was a Sunday morning in May; that it was Easter Sunday, and as yet very early in the morning. I was standing, as it seemed to me, at the door of my own cottage. Right before me lay the very scene which could really be commanded from that situation, but exalted, as was usual, and solemnized by the power of dreams. There were the same mountains, and the same lovely valley at their feet; but the mountains were raised to more than Alpine height, and there was interspace far larger between them of savannahs and forest lawns; the hedges were rich with white roses; and no living creature was to be seen, excepting that in the green churchyard there were cattle tranquilly reposing upon the verdant graves, and particularly round about the grave of a child whom I had once tenderly loved, just as I had really beheld them, a little before sunrise, in the same summer when that child died. I gazed upon the well-known scene, and I said to myself, "It yet wants much of sunrise; and it is Easter Sunday; and that is the day on which they celebrate the first-fruits of Resurrection. I will walk abroad; old griefs shall be forgotten to-day: for the air is cool and still, and the hills are high, and stretch away to heaven; and the churchyard is as verdant as the forest lawns, and the forest lawns are as quiet as the churchyard; and with the dew I can wash the fever from my forehead; and

then I shall be unhappy no longer." I turned, as if to open my garden gate, and immediately I saw upon the left a scene far different; but which yet the power of dreams had reconciled into harmony. The scene was an Oriental one; and there also it was Easter Sunday, and very early in the morning. And at a vast distance were visible, as a stain upon the horizon, the domes and cupolas of a great city—an image or faint abstraction, caught perhaps in childhood from some picture of Jerusalem. And not a bow-shot from me, upon a stone, shaded by Judean palms, there sat a woman; and I looked, and it was—Ann! She fixed her eyes upon me earnestly; and I said to her at length, "So, then, I have found you at last." I waited; but she answered me not a word. Her face was the same as when I saw it last; the same, and yet, again, how different! Seventeen years ago, when the lamp-light of mighty London fell upon her face, as for the last time I kissed her lips (lips, Ann, that to me were not polluted!), her eyes were streaming with tears. The tears were now no longer seen. Sometimes she seemed altered; yet again sometimes *not* altered; and hardly older. Her looks were tranquil, but with unusual solemnity of expression, and I now gazed upon her with some awe. Suddenly her countenance grew dim; and, turning to the mountains, I perceived vapors rolling between us; in a moment all had vanished; thick darkness came on; and in the twinkling of an eye I was far away from mountains, and by lamp-light in London, walking again with Ann—just as we had walked, when both children, eighteen years before, along the endless terraces of Oxford Street.

Then suddenly would come a dream of far different character—a tumultuous dream—commencing with a music such as now I often heard in sleep—music of preparation and of awakening suspense. The undulations of fast-gathering tumults were like the opening of the Coronation Anthem; and, like *that*, gave the feeling of a multitudinous movement, of

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infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and of ultimate hope for human nature, then suffering mysterious eclipse, and laboring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, but I knew not where—somehow, but I knew not how—by some beings, but I knew not by whom—a battle, a strife, an agony, was traveling through all its stages—was evolving itself, like the catastrophe of some mighty drama, with which my sympathy was the more insupportable, from deepening confusion as to its local scene, its cause, its nature, and its undecipherable issue. I (as is usual in dreams where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement) had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself to will it; and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexpiable guilt. “Deeper than ever plummet sounded,” I lay inactive. Then, like a chorus, the passion deepened. Some greater interest was at stake, some mightier cause, than ever yet the sword had pleaded, or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms; hurrying to and fro; trepidations of innumerable fugitives, I knew not whether from the good cause or the bad; darkness and lights; tempest and human faces; and at last, with the sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me; and but a moment allowed—and clasped hands, with heart-breaking partings, and then—everlasting farewells! and, with a sigh such as the caves of hell sighed when the incestuous mother uttered the abhorred name of Death, the sound was reverberated—everlasting farewells! and again, and yet again reverberated—everlasting farewells!

And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud, “I will sleep no more!”

John Ruskin

AND now I wish that the reader, before I bring him into St. Mark's Place, would imagine himself for a little time in a quiet English cathedral town, and walk with me to the west front of its cathedral. Let us go together up the more retired street, at the end of which we can see the pinnacles of one of the towers, and then through the low gray gateway, with its battlemented top and small latticed window in the center, into the inner private-looking road or close, where nothing goes in but the carts of the tradesmen who supply the bishop and the chapter, and where there are little shaven grass-plots, fenced in by neat rails, before old-fashioned groups of somewhat diminutive and excessively trim houses, with little oriel and bay windows jutting out here and there, and deep wooden cornices and eaves painted cream color and white, and small porches to their doors in the shape of cockle-shells, or little, crooked, thick, indescribable wooden gables warped a little on one side; and so forward till we come to larger houses, also old-fashioned, but of red brick, and with garden behind them, and fruit walls, which show here and there, among the nectarines, the vestiges of an old cloister arch or shaft, and looking in front on the cathedral square itself, laid out in rigid divisions of smooth grass and gravel walk, yet not uncheerful, especially on the sunny side, where the canon's children are walking with their nurserymaids. And so, taking care not to tread on the grass, we will go along the straight walk to the west front, and there stand for a time, looking up at its deep-pointed porches and the dark places

¹ From *The Stones of Venice*.

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between their pillars where there were statues once, and where the fragments, here and there, of a stately figure are still left, which has in it the likeness of a king, perhaps indeed a king on earth, perhaps a saintly king long ago in heaven; and so higher and higher up to the great moldering wall of rugged sculpture and confused arcades, shattered, and gray, and grisly with heads of dragons and mocking fiends, worn by the rain and swirling winds into yet unseemlier shape, and colored on their stony scales by the deep russet-orange lichen, melancholy gold; and so, higher still, to the bleak towers, so far above that the eye loses itself among the bosses of their traceries, though they are rude and strong, and only sees like a drift of eddying black points, now closing, now scattering, and now settling suddenly into invisible places among the bosses and flowers, the crowd of restless birds that fill the whole square with that strange clangor of theirs, so harsh and yet so soothing, like the cries of birds on a solitary coast between the cliffs and sea.

Think for a little while of that scene, and the meaning of all its small formalisms, mixed with its serene sublimity. Estimate its secluded, continuous, drowsy felicities, and its evidence of the sense and steady performance of such kind of duties as can be regulated by the cathedral clock; and weigh the influence of those dark towers on all who have passed through the lonely square at their feet for centuries, and on all who have seen them rising far away over the wooded plain, or catching on their square masses the last rays of the sunset, when the city at their feet was indicated only by the mist at the bend of the river. And then let us quickly recollect that we are in Venice, and land at the extremity of the Calle Lunga San Moisè, which may be considered as there answering to the secluded street that led us to our English cathedral gateway.

We find ourselves in a paved alley, some seven feet wide where it is widest, full of people, and resonant with cries of itinerant salesmen,—a shriek in their beginning, and dying away

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into a kind of brazen ringing, all the worse for its confinement between the high houses of the passage along which we have to make our way. Overhead, an inextricable confusion of rugged shutters, and iron balconies and chimney flues, pushed out on brackets to save room, and arched windows with projecting sills of Istrian stone, and gleams of green leaves here and there where a fig-tree branch escapes over a lower wall from some inner cortile, leading the eye up to the narrow stream of blue sky high over all. On each side, a row of shops, as densely set as may be, occupying, in fact, intervals between the square stone shafts, about eight feet high, which carry the first floors: intervals of which one is narrow and serves as a door; the other is, in the more respectable shops, wainscoted to the height of the counter and glazed above, but in those of the poorer tradesmen left open to the ground, and the wares laid on benches and tables in the open air, the light in all cases entering at the front only, and fading away in a few feet from the threshold into a gloom which the eye from without cannot penetrate, but which is generally broken by a ray or two from a feeble lamp at the back of the shop, suspended before a print of the Virgin. The less pious shopkeeper sometimes leaves his lamp unlighted, and is contented with a penny print; the more religious one has his print colored and set in a little shrine with a gilded or figured fringe, with perhaps a faded flower or two on each side, and his lamp burning brilliantly. Here, at the fruiterer's, where the dark-green watermelons are heaped upon the counter like cannon balls, the Madonna has a tabernacle of fresh laurel leaves; but the pewterer next door has let his lamp out, and there is nothing to be seen in his shop but the dull gleam of the studded patterns on the copper pans, hanging from his roof in the darkness. Next comes a "Vendita Frittole e Liquori," where the Virgin, enthroned in a very humble manner beside a tallow candle on a back shelf, presides over certain ambrosial morsels of a nature too ambiguous to be defined or enumerated.

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But a few steps farther on, at the regular wine-shop of the *calle*, where we are offered "Vino Nostrano a Soldi 28.32," the Madonna is in great glory, enthroned above ten or a dozen large red casks of three-year-old vintage, and flanked by goodly ranks of bottles of Maraschino, and two crimson lamps; and for the evening, when the gondoliers will come to drink out, under her auspices, the money they have gained during the day, she will have a whole chandelier.

A yard or two farther, we pass the hostelry of the Black Eagle, and glancing as we pass through the square door of marble, deeply molded, in the outer wall, we see the shadows of its pergola of vines resting on an ancient well, with a pointed shield carved on its side; and so presently emerge on the bridge and Campo San Moisè, whence to the entrance into St. Mark's Place, called the Bocca di Piazza (mouth of the square), the Venetian character is nearly destroyed, first by the frightful façade of San Moisè, which we will pause at another time to examine, and then by the modernizing of the shops as they near the piazza, and the mingling with the lower Venetian populace of lounging groups of English and Austrians. We will push fast through them into the shadow of the pillars at the end of the "Bocca di Piazza," and then we forget them all; for between those pillars there opens a great light, and, in the midst of it, as we advance slowly, the vast tower of St. Mark seems to lift itself visibly forth from the level field of chequered stones; and, on each side, the countless arches prolong themselves into ranged symmetry, as if the rugged and irregular houses that pressed together above us in the dark alley had been struck back into sudden obedience and lovely order, and all their rude casements and broken walls had been transformed into arches charged with goodly sculpture, and fluted shafts of delicate stone.

And well may they fall back, for beyond those troops of ordered arches there rises a vision out of the earth, and all the

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great square seems to have opened from it in a kind of awe, that we may see it far away;—a multitude of pillars and white domes, clustered into a long low pyramid of colored light; a treasure-heap, it seems, partly of gold, and partly of opal and mother-of-pearl, hollowed beneath into five great vaulted porches, ceiled with fair mosaic, and beset with sculpture of alabaster, clear as amber and delicate as ivory,—sculpture fantastic and involved, of palm leaves and lilies, and grapes and pomegranates, and birds clinging and fluttering among the branches, all twined together into an endless network of buds and plumes; and in the midst of it, the solemn forms of angels, sceptred, and robed to the feet, and leaning to each other across the gates, their figures indistinct among the gleaming of the golden ground through the leaves beside them, interrupted and dim, like the morning light as it faded back among the branches of Eden, when first its gates were angel-guarded long ago. And round the walls of the porches there are set pillars of variegated stones, jasper and porphyry, and deep-green serpentine spotted with flakes of snow, and marbles, that half refuse and half yield to the sunshine, Cleopatra-like, “their bluest veins to kiss”—the shadow, as it steals back from them, revealing line after line of azure undulation, as a receding tide leaves the waved sand; their capitals rich with interwoven tracery, rooted knots of herbage, and drifting leaves of acanthus and vine, and mystical signs, all beginning and ending in the Cross; and above them, in the broad archivolts, a continuous chain of language and of life—angels, and the signs of heaven, and the labors of men, each in its appointed season upon the earth; and above these, another range of glittering pinnacles, mixed with white arches edged with scarlet flowers,—a confusion of delight, amidst which the breasts of the Greek horses are seen blazing in their breadth of golden strength, and the St. Mark’s lion, lifted on a blue field covered with stars, until at last, as if in ecstasy, the crests of the arches break into a

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marble foam, and toss themselves far into the blue sky in flashes and wreaths of sculptured spray, as if the breakers on the Lido shore had been frost-bound before they fell, and the sea-nymphs had inlaid them with coral and amethyst.

Between that grim cathedral of England and this, what an interval! There is a type of it in the very birds that haunt them; for, instead of the restless crowd, hoarse-voiced and sable-winged, drifting on the bleak upper air, the St. Mark's porches are full of doves, that nestle among the marble foliage, and mingle the soft iridescence of their living plumes, changing at every motion, with the tints, hardly less lovely, that have stood unchanged for seven hundred years.

The author conducts the reader into the dimly lighted Baptistery, where stands the tomb of an ancient doge—to whom he now alludes as he passes on into the cathedral proper.

Through the heavy door whose bronze network closes the place of his rest, let us enter the church itself. It is lost in still deeper twilight, to which the eye must be accustomed for some moments before the form of the building can be traced, and then there opens before us a vast cave, hewn out into the form of a Cross, and divided into shadowy aisles by many pillars. Round the domes of its roof the light enters only through narrow apertures like large stars; and here and there a ray or two from some far-away casement wanders into the darkness, and casts a narrow phosphoric stream upon the waves of marble that heave and fall in a thousand colors along the floor. What else there is of light is from torches, or silver lamps, burning ceaselessly in the recesses of the chapels; the roof sheeted with gold, and the polished walls covered with alabaster, give back at every curve and angle some feeble gleam to the flames; and the glories round the heads of the sculptured saints flash out upon us as we pass them, and sink

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again into the gloom. Under foot and over head, a continual succession of crowded imagery, one picture passing into another, as in a dream; forms beautiful and terrible mixed together; dragons and serpents, and ravening beasts of prey, and graceful birds that in the midst of them drink from running fountains and feed from vases of crystal; the passions and the pleasures of human life symbolized together, and the mystery of its redemption; for the mazes of interwoven lines and changeful pictures lead always at last to the Cross, lifted and carved in every place and upon every stone; sometimes with the serpent of eternity wrapped round it, sometimes with doves beneath its arms, and sweet herbage growing forth from its feet; but conspicuous most of all on the great rood that crosses the church before the altar, raised in bright blazonry against the shadow of the apse. And although in the recesses of the aisles and chapels, when the mist of the incense hangs heavily, we may see continually a figure traced in faint lines upon their marble, a woman standing with her eyes raised to heaven, and the inscription above her, "Mother of God," she is not here the presiding deity. It is the Cross that is first seen, and always, burning in the center of the temple; and every dome and hollow of its roof has the figure of Christ in the utmost height of it, raised in power, or returning in judgment.

Walter Pater

LA GIOCONDA is, in the truest sense, Leonardo's masterpiece, the revealing instance of his mode of thought and work. In suggestiveness, only the *Melancholia* of Dürer is comparable to it; and no crude symbolism disturbs the effect of its subdued and graceful mystery. We all know the face and hands of the figure, set in its marble chair, in that circle of fantastic rocks, as in some faint light under sea. Perhaps of all ancient pictures time has chilled it least.² As often happens with works in which invention seems to reach its limit, there is an element in it given to, not invented by, the master. In that inestimable folio of drawings, once in the possession of Vasari, were certain designs by Verrocchio, faces of such impressive beauty that Leonardo in his boyhood copied them many times. It is hard not to connect with these designs of the elder, by-past master, as with its germinal principle, the unfathomable smile, always with a touch of something sinister in it, which plays over all Leonardo's work. Besides, the picture is a portrait. From childhood we see this image defining itself on the fabric of his dreams, and but for express historical testimony, we might fancy that this was but his ideal lady, embodied and beheld at last. What was the relationship of a living Florentine to this creature of his thought? By what strange affinities had the dream and the person grown up thus apart, and yet so closely together? Present from the first incorporeally in Leonardo's

¹ From the essay on Leonardo da Vinci, in *The Renaissance*. The portrait here called *La Gioconda* is commonly known as the *Mona Lisa*.

² Yet for Vasari there was some further magic of crimson in the lips and cheeks, lost for us. [Author's note.]

brain, dimly traced in the designs of Verrocchio, she is found present at last in *Il Giocondo's* house. That there is much of mere portraiture in this picture is attested by the legend that by artificial means, the presence of mimes and flute-players, that subtle expression was protracted on the face. Again, was it in four years and by renewed labor never really completed, or in four months and as by stroke of magic, that the image was projected?

The presence that rose thus so strangely beside the waters, is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years men had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which all "the ends of the world are come," and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed! All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and molded there, in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the mysticism of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants, and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has molded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands. The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is

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an old one; and modern philosophy has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea.¹

¹ It may be strongly suspected that in this famous description there is more of Pater than of Leonardo. At any rate, it is hardly to be accepted, unexamined, as an authentic interpretation of the artist's meaning. For an impressive discussion of the large issues involved, see the essay on Pater by Paul Elmer More in the Eighth Series of the *Shelburne Essays*.

Thomas Hardy

The silence of those infinite spaces fills me with terror.

—PASCAL

SWITHIN ST. CLEEVE has promised Lady Constantine that if she will come on a clear night to an isolated tower where he is engaged in making astronomical observations he will show her the wonders of the sky. He is a youth of twenty, she a woman of twenty-eight or nine. She now comes to claim his promise, though in fact her visit is prompted more by a desire to make him her confidant and helper in a personal difficulty, than by curiosity regarding stars and planets. The Mr. Torkingham whom Lady Constantine mentions is the vicar of the parish.

She ascended the tower noiselessly. On raising her head above the hatchway she beheld Swithin bending over a scroll of paper which lay on the little table beside him. The small lantern that illuminated it showed also that he was warmly wrapped up in a coat and thick cap, behind him standing the telescope on its frame.

What was he doing? She looked over his shoulder upon the paper, and saw figures and signs. When he had jotted down something he went to the telescope again.

"What are you doing to-night?" she said in a low voice.

¹ From *Two on a Tower*. Reprinted with the permission of Harper & Brothers.—This passage, like the companion passage by W. H. Hudson which follows it, is here offered, primarily, not for its narrative or dramatic, but for its descriptive interest. For the epigraph the present editors are responsible.

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Swithin started, and turned. The faint lamp-light was sufficient to reveal her face to him.

"Tedious work, Lady Constantine," he answered, without betraying much surprise. "Doing my best to watch phenomenal stars, as I may call them."

"You said you would show me the heavens if I could come on a starlight night. I have come."

Swithin, as a preliminary, swept round the telescope to Jupiter, and exhibited to her the glory of that orb. Then he directed the instrument to the less bright shape of Saturn.

"Here," he said, warming up to the subject, "we see a world which is to my mind by far the most wonderful in the solar system. Think of streams of satellites or meteors racing round and round the planet like a flywheel, so close together as to seem solid matter!" He entered further and further into the subject, his ideas gathering momentum as he went on, like his pet heavenly bodies.

When he paused for breath she said, in tones very different from his own, "I ought now to tell you that, though I am interested in the stars, they were not what I came to see you about. . . . I first thought of disclosing the matter to Mr. Torkingham; but I altered my mind, and decided on you."

She spoke in so low a voice that he might not have heard her. At all events, abstracted by his grand theme, he did not heed her. He continued,—

"Well, we will get outside the solar system altogether,—leave the whole group of sun, primary and secondary planets quite behind us in our flight, as a bird might leave its bush and sweep into the whole forest. Now what do you see, Lady Constantine?" He leveled the achromatic at Sirius.

She said that she saw a bright star, though it only seemed a point of light now as before.

"That's because it is so distant that no magnifying will bring its size up to zero. Though called a fixed star, it is

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like all fixed stars, moving with inconceivable velocity; but no magnifying will show that velocity as anything but rest."

And thus they talked on about Sirius, and then about other stars

"... in the scrowl
Of all those beasts, and fish, and fowl,
With which, like Indian plantations,
The learned stock the constellations,"

till he asked her how many stars she thought were visible to them at that moment.

She looked around over the magnificent stretch of sky that their high position unfolded. "Oh, thousands,—hundreds of thousands," she said absently.

"No. There are only about three thousand. Now, how many do you think are brought within sight by the help of a powerful telescope?"

"I won't guess."

"Twenty millions. So that, whatever the stars were made for, they were not made to please our eyes. It is just the same in everything; nothing is made for man."

"Is it that notion which makes you so sad for your age?" she asked, with almost maternal solicitude. "I think astronomy is a bad study for you. It makes you feel human insignificance too plainly."

"Perhaps it does. However," he added more cheerfully, "though I feel the study to be one almost tragic in its quality, I hope to be the new Copernicus. What he was to the solar system I aim to be to the systems beyond."

Then, by means of the instrument at hand, they traveled together from the earth to Uranus and the mysterious outskirts of the solar system; from the solar system to a star in the Swan, the nearest fixed star in the northern sky; from the star in the Swan to remoter stars; thence to the remotest visible;

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till the ghastly chasm which they had bridged by a fragile line of sight was realized by Lady Constantine.

"We are now traversing distances beside which the immense line stretching from the earth to the sun is but an invisible point," said the youth. "When, just now, we had reached a planet whose remoteness is a hundred times the remoteness of the sun from the earth, we were only a two thousandth part of the journey to the spot at which we have optically arrived now."

"Oh, pray don't; it overpowers me!" she replied, not without seriousness. "It makes me feel that it is not worth while to live; it quite annihilates me."

"If it annihilates your ladyship to roam over these yawning spaces just once, think how it must annihilate me to be as it were, in constant suspension amid them night after night."

"Yes. . . . It was not really this subject that I came to see you upon, Mr. St. Cleeve," she began a second time. "It was a personal matter."

"I am listening, Lady Constantine."

"I will tell it you. Yet no,—not this moment. Let us first discuss this grand subject first; it dwarfs mine."

It would have been difficult to judge from her accent whether she were afraid to broach her own matter, or really interested in his. Or a certain youthful pride that he evinced at being the elucidator of such a large theme, and having drawn her there to hear and observe it, may have inclined her to indulge him for kindness' sake.

Thereupon he took exception to her use of the word "grand" as descriptive of the actual universe:

"The imaginary picture of the sky as the concavity of a dome whose base extends from horizon to horizon of our earth is grand, simply grand, and I wish I had never got beyond looking at it in that way. But the actual sky is a horror."

"A new view of our old friends, the stars," she said, smiling up at them.

"But such an obviously true one!" said the young man. "You would hardly think, at first, that horrid monsters lie up there waiting to be discovered by any moderately penetrating mind—monsters to which those of the oceans bear no sort of comparison."

"What monsters may they be?"

"Impersonal monsters, namely, Immensities. Until a person has thought out the stars and their interspaces, he has hardly learned that there are things much more terrible than monsters of shape, namely, monsters of magnitude without known shape. Such monsters are the voids and waste places of the sky. Look, for instance, at those pieces of darkness in the Milky Way," he went on, pointing with his finger to where the galaxy stretched across over their heads with the luminousness of a frosted web. "You see that dark opening in it near the Swan? There is a still more remarkable one south of the equator, called the Coal Sack, as a sort of nickname that has a farcical force from its very inadequacy. In these our sight plunges quite beyond any twinkler we have yet visited. Those are deep wells for the human mind to let itself down into, leave alone the human body! and think of the side caverns and secondary abysses to right and left as you pass on!"

Lady Constantine was heedful and silent.

He tried to give her yet another idea of the size of the universe; never was there a more ardent endeavor to bring down the immeasurable to human comprehension! By figures of speech and apt comparisons he took her mind into leading-strings, compelling her to follow him into wildernesses of which she had never in her life even realized the existence.

"There is a size at which dignity begins," he exclaimed; "further on there is a size at which grandeur begins; further

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on there is a size at which solemnity begins; further on, a size at which awfulness begins; further on, a size at which ghastliness begins. That size faintly approaches the size of the stellar universe. So am I not right in saying that those minds who exert their imaginative powers to bury themselves in the depths of that universe merely strain their faculties to gain a new horror?"

Standing, as she stood, in the presence of the stellar universe under the very eyes of the constellations, Lady Constantine apprehended something of the earnest youth's argument.

"And to add a new weirdness to what the sky possesses in its size and formlessness, there is involved the quality of decay. For all the wonder of these everlasting stars, eternal spheres and what not, they are not everlasting, they are not eternal; they burn out like candles. You see that dying one in the body of the Greater Bear? Two centuries ago it was as bright as the others. The senses may become terrified by plunging among them as they are, but there is a pitifulness even in their glory. Imagine them all extinguished, and your mind feeling its way through a heaven of total darkness occasionally striking against the black, invisible cinders of those stars. . . . If you are cheerful, and wish to remain so, leave the study of astronomy alone. Of all the sciences, it alone deserves the character of the terrible."

"I am not altogether cheerful."

"Then if, on the other hand, you are restless and anxious about the future, study astronomy at once. Your troubles will be reduced amazingly. But your study will reduce them in a singular way, by reducing the importance of everything. So that the science is still terrible, even as a panacea. It is quite impossible to think at all adequately of the sky—of what the sky substantially is, without feeling it as a juxtaposed nightmare. It is better—far better—for men to forget the universe than to bear it clearly in mind!"

W. H. Hudson

THE hero and relater of the romance, a rover in the wilds of Venezuela, comes upon a strange girl, Rima, who belongs to some unknown and vanished race. She lives in the depths of the forest with an old man, Nuflo, who exercises a kind of guardianship over her. When with mankind she speaks Spanish, but when alone with nature she abandons human speech for melodious birdnotes. To this—

“ . . . lyric love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire”

—for she is really an incarnation of the romantic spirit—the enamored narrator reveals the vastness of the world she lives in.

Rima is the speaker of the opening words.

“Come with me,” she said, and turning, moved swiftly towards the northern extremity of the forest. She seemed to take it for granted that I would follow, never casting a look behind, nor pausing in her rapid walk; but I was only too glad to obey, and starting up, was quickly after her. She led me by easy ways, familiar to her, with many doublings to escape the undergrowth, never speaking or pausing until we came out from the thick forest, and I found myself for the first time at the foot of the great hill or mountain Ytaioa. Glancing back for a few moments, she waved a hand towards the summit, and then at once began the ascent. Here too it

¹ From *Green Mansions*. Reprinted through special arrangement with Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., the authorized publishers.

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seemed all familiar ground to her. From below, the sides had presented an exceedingly rugged appearance—a wild confusion of huge jagged rocks, mixed with a tangled vegetation of trees, bushes, and vines; but following her in all her doublings it became easy enough, although it fatigued me greatly, owing to our rapid pace. The hill was conical, but I found that it had a flat top; an oblong or pear-shaped area, almost level, of soft, crumbly sandstone, with a few blocks and boulders of harder stone scattered about; and no vegetation, except the grassy mountain lichen and a few sere-looking dwarf shrubs.

Here Rima, at a distance of a few yards from me, remained standing still for some minutes, as if to give me time to recover my breath; and I was right glad to sit down on a stone to rest. Finally she walked slowly to the center of the level area, which was about two acres in extent; rising I followed her, and climbing onto a huge block of stone, began gazing at the wide prospect spread out before me. The day was windless and bright, with only a few white clouds floating at a great height above and casting traveling shadows over the wild, broken country, where forest, marsh, and savannah were only distinguishable by their different colors, like the grasses and greens and yellows on a map. At a great distance the circle of the horizon was broken here and there by mountains, but the hills in our neighborhood were all beneath our feet.

After gazing all round for some minutes, I jumped down from my stand, and leaning against the stone, stood watching the girl, waiting for her to speak. I felt convinced that she had something of the very highest importance (to herself) to communicate, and that only the pressing need of a confidante, not Nuflo, had overcome her shyness of me; and I determined to let her take her own time to say it in her own way. For a while she continued silent, her face averted, but her little movements and the way she clasped and unclasped her fingers

showed that she was anxious and her mind working. Suddenly, half turning to me, she began speaking eagerly and rapidly.

"Do you see," she said, waving her hand to indicate the whole circuit of earth, "how large it is? Look!" pointing now to mountains in the west. "Those are the Vahanas—one, two, three—the highest—I can tell you their names—Vahana-Chara, Chumi, Aranoa. Do you see that water? It is a river, called Guaypero. From the hills it comes down, Inaruna is their name, and you can see them there in the south—far, far." And in this way she went on pointing out and naming all the mountains and rivers within sight. Then she suddenly dropped her hands to her sides, and continued, "That is all. Because we can see no further. But the world is larger than that! Other mountains, other rivers. Have I not told you of Voa, on the River Voa, where I was born, where mother died, where the priest taught me, years, years ago? All that you cannot see, it is so far away—so far."

I did not laugh at her simplicity, nor did I smile or feel any inclination to smile. On the contrary, I only experienced a sympathy so keen that it was like pain, while watching her clouded face, so changeful in its expression, yet in all changes so wistful. I could not yet form any idea as to what she wished to communicate or to discover, but seeing that she paused for a reply I answered, "The world is so large, Rima, that we can only see a very small portion of it from any one spot. Look at this," and with a stick I had used to aid me in my ascent I traced a circle six or seven inches in circumference on the soft stone and in its center placed a small pebble. "This represents the mountain we are standing on," I continued, touching the pebble; "and this line encircling it encloses all of the earth we can see from the mountain-top. Do you understand?—the line I have traced is the blue line of the horizon beyond which we cannot see. And outside of this little circle is all the flat top of Ytaioa representing the world. Consider,

then how small a portion of the world we can see from this spot!"

"And do you know it all?" she returned excitedly. "All the world?" waving her hand to indicate the little stone plain. "All the mountains, and rivers, and forests—all the people in the world?"

"That would be impossible, Rima; consider how large it is."

"That does not matter. Come, let us go together—your father, your mother, and grandfather, and see all the world; all the mountains and forests, and know all the people."

"You do not know what you are saying, Rima. You might as well say, 'Come, let us go to the sun and find out everything in it.'"

"It is you who do not know what you are saying," she retorted, with brightening eyes which for a moment glanced full into mine. "We have no wings like birds to fly to the sun. Am I not able to walk on the earth, and run? Can I not swim? Can I not climb every mountain?"

"No, you cannot. You imagine that all the earth is like this little portion you see. But it is not all the same. There are great rivers which you cannot cross by swimming; mountains you cannot climb; forests you cannot penetrate—dark, and inhabited by dangerous beasts, and so vast that all this space your eyes look on is a mere speck of earth in comparison."

She listened excitedly. "Oh, do you know all that?" she cried, with a strangely brightening look; and then half turning from me, she added, with sudden petulance, "Yet only a minute ago you knew nothing of the world—because it is so large! Is anything to be gained by speaking to one who says such contrary things?"

I explained that I had not contradicted myself, that she had not rightly interpreted my words. I knew, I said, something about the principal features of the different countries of the world, as, for instance, the largest mountain ranges, and riv-

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and the cities. Also something, but very little, about the tribes of savage men. She heard me with impatience, which made me speak rapidly, in very general terms; and to simplify the matter I made the world stand for the continent we were in. It seemed idle to go beyond that, and her eagerness would not have allowed it.

"Tell me all you know," she said, the moment I ceased speaking. "What is there—and there—and there?" pointing in various directions. "Rivers and forests—they are nothing to me. The villages, the tribes, the people everywhere; tell me, for I must know it all."

"It would take long to tell, Rima."

"Because you are so slow. Look how high the sun is! Speak, speak! What is there?" pointing to the north.

"All that country," I said, waving my hands from east to west, "is Guayana; and so large is it that you could go in this direction, or in this, traveling for months, without seeing the end of Guayana. Still it would be Guayana; rivers, rivers, rivers, with forests between, and other forests and rivers beyond. And savage people, nations and tribes—Guahibo. Aguaricoto, Ayano, Maco, Piaroa, Quiriquiripo, Tugarito—shall I name a hundred more? It would be useless, Rima; they are all savages, and live widely scattered in the forests, hunting with bow and arrow and the zabatana. Consider, then, how large Guayana is!"

"Guayana—Guayana! Do I not know all this is Guayana? But beyond, and beyond, and beyond? Is there no end to Guayana?"

"Yes; there northwards it ends at the Orinoco, a mighty river, coming from mighty mountains, compared with which Ytaioa is like a stone on the ground on which we have sat down to rest. You must know that Guayana is only a portion, a half, of our country, Venezuela. Look," I continued, putting my hand round my shoulder to touch the middle of my

back, "there is a groove running down my spine dividing my body into equal parts. Thus does the great Orinoco divide Venezuela, and on one side of it is all Guayana; and on the other side the countries or provinces of Cumana, Maturin, Barcelona, Bolivar, Guarico, Apure, and many others." I then gave a rapid description of the northern half of the country, with its vast llanos covered with herds in one part, its plantations of coffee, rice, and sugar-cane in another, and its chief towns; last of all Caracas, the gay and opulent little Paris in America.

This seemed to weary her; but the moment I ceased speaking, and before I could well moisten my dry lips, she demanded to know what came after Caracas—after all Venezuela.

"The ocean—water, water, water," I replied.

"There are no people there—in the water; only fishes," she remarked; then suddenly continued, "Why are you silent—is Venezuela, then, all the world?"

The task I had set myself to perform seemed only at its commencement yet. Thinking how to proceed with it my eyes roved over the level area we were standing on, and it struck me that this little irregular plain, broad at one end, and almost pointed at the other, roughly resembled the South American continent in its form.

"Look, Rima," I began, "here we are on this small pebble—Ytaioa; and this line round it shuts us in—we cannot see beyond. Now let us imagine that we can see beyond—that we can see the whole flat mountain-top; and that, you know, is the whole world. Now listen while I tell you of all the countries, and principal mountains, and rivers, and cities of the world."

The plan I had now fixed on involved a great deal of walking about and some hard work in moving and setting up stones; and tracing boundary and other lines; but it gave me pleasure, for Rima was close by all the time, following me from place

to place, listening to all I said in silence but with keen interest. At the broad end of the level summit I marked out Venezuela, showing by means of a long line how the Orinoco divided it, and also marking several of the greater streams flowing into it. I also marked the sites of Caracas and other large towns with stones; and rejoiced that we are not like the Europeans, great city builders, for the stones proved heavy to lift. Then followed Colombia and Ecuador on the west; and, successively, Bolivia, Peru, Chile, ending at last in the south with Patagonia, a cold arid land, bleak and desolate. I marked the littoral cities as we progressed on that side, where earth ends and the Pacific Ocean begins, and infinitude.

Then, in a sudden burst of inspiration, I described the Cordilleras to her—that world-long stupendous chain; its sea of Titicaca, and wintry, desolate Paramo, where lie the ruins of Tiahuanaco, older than Thebes. I mentioned its principal cities—those small inflamed or festering pimples that attract much attention from appearing on such a body. Quito, called—not in irony, but by its own people—the Splendid and the Magnificent; so high above the earth as to appear but a little way removed from heaven—“de Quito al cielo,”¹ as the saying is. But of its sublime history, its kings and conquerors, Haymar Capac the Mighty, and Huascar, and Atahualpa the Unhappy, not one word. Many words—how inadequate!—of the summits, white with everlasting snows, above it—above this novel of the world, above the earth, the ocean, the darkening tempest, the condor’s flight. Flame-breathing Cotopaxi, whose wrathful mutterings are audible two hundred leagues away, and Chimborazo, Antisana, Sarata, Illimani, Aconcagua—names of mountains that affect us like the names of gods, implacable Pachacamac and Viracocha, whose everlasting granite thrones they are. At the last I showed her Cuzco, the city of the sun, and the highest dwelling place of men on earth.

¹ After Quito—heaven.

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I was carried away by so sublime a theme; and remembering that I had no critical hearer, I gave free reins to fancy, forgetting for the moment that some undiscovered thought or feeling had prompted her questions. And while I spoke of the mountains she hung on my words, following me closely in my walk, her countenance brilliant, her frame quivering with excitement.

There yet remained to be described all that unimaginable space east of the Andes; the rivers—what rivers!—the green plains that are like the sea—the illimitable waste of water where there is no land—and the forest region. The very thought of the Amazonian forest made my spirit droop. If I could have snatched her up and placed her on the dome of Chimborazo she would have looked on an area of ten thousand square miles of earth, so vast is the horizon at that elevation. And possibly her imagination would have been able to clothe it all with an unbroken forest. Yet how small a portion this would be of the stupendous whole—of a forest region equal in extent to the whole of Europe! All loveliness, all grace, all majesty are there; but we cannot see, cannot conceive—come away! From this vast stage, to be occupied in the distant future by millions and myriads of beings, like us of upright form, the nations that will be born when all the existing dominant races on the globe and the civilizations they represent have perished as utterly as those who sculptured the stones of old Tiahuanaco—from this theater of palms prepared for a drama unlike any which the Immortals have yet witnessed—I hurried away; and then slowly conducted her along the Atlantic coast, listening to the thunder of its great waves, and pausing at intervals to survey some maritime city.

Never probably since old Father Noah divided the earth among his sons had so grand a geographical discourse been delivered; and having finished, I sat down, exhausted with my efforts, and mopped my brow, but glad that my huge task

was over, and satisfied that I had convinced her of the futility of her wish to see the world for herself.

Her excitement had passed away by now. She was standing a little apart from me, her eyes cast down and thoughtful. At length she approached me and said, waving her hand all round, "What is beyond the mountains over there, beyond the cities on that side—beyond the world?"

"Water, only water. Did I not tell you?" I returned stoutly; for I had, of course, sunk the Isthmus of Panama beneath the sea.

"Water! All round?" she persisted.

"Yes."

"Water, and no beyond? Only water—always water?"

I could no longer adhere to so gross a lie. She was too intelligent, and I loved her too much. Standing up, I pointed to distant mountains and isolated peaks.

"Look at those peaks," I said. "It is like that with the world—this world we are standing on. Beyond that great water that flows all round the world, but far away, so far that it would take months in a big boat to reach them, there are islands, some small, others as large as this world. But, Rima, they are so far away, so impossible to reach, that it is useless to speak or to think of them. They are to us like the sun and moon and stars, to which we cannot fly. And now sit down and rest by my side, for you know everything."



VII

OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVE AND MODERN FICTION

*Poetry [imaginative literature] . . . is a
more philosophical and a higher thing than
history . . .*

—ARISTOTLE (translated by Butcher)



*Old Testament*¹

What girl
Now reads in her bosom as clear
As Rebekah read, when she sate
At eve by the palm-shaded well?
Who guards in her breast
As deep, as pellucid a spring
Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure?

—MATTHEW ARNOLD

AND Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear

¹ King James version.

from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made

OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVE

his journey prosperous or not. And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold; and said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in? And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. And the man bowed down his head, and worshiped the Lord. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren.

And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things. And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels. And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him.

And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on. And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was

old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. And he said unto me, The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house: then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath. And I came this day unto the well, and said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; and she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the Lord hath appointed out for my master's son. And before I had done speaking in my heart, behold Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also. And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. And I bowed down my head, and worshiped the Lord, and blessed the Lord God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son. And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me

and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.

Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the Lord: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken. And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshiped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth.

And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them. And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh

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in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

*Old Testament*¹

AND Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: for, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the

¹ King James version.

earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying. And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan. And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again. And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colors that was on him; and they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites, merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver; and they brought Joseph into Egypt. And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go? And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; and they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found know now whether it be thy son's coat or no. And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him. And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.

And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites, which had brought him down thither. And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for

Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught he had, save bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favored. And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, that she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them saying, See, he hath brought in a Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: and it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: and it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out. And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison,

a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.

And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward. And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you. And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; and in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said

unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days: yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon. When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head: and in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head. And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days: yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee. And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand: but he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favored kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favored and leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. And the ill favored and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favored and fat kine. So Pha-

araoh awoke. And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream. And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh. Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day: Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker: and we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged. Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of a river: and, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favored; and they fed in a meadow: and, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favored and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: and the lean and the ill favored kine did eat up the first

seven fat kine: and when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still in good favored, as at the beginning. So I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good: and, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them: and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me. And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill favored kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: what God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt; and there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine. And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. And

Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. And in the seven plenteous years, the earth brought forth by handfuls. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number. And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manassch: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. And the seven years of plenteousness,

that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said; and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look upon one another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die. And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him. And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan. And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies. And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come

And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not. And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies: hereby ye shall be proved: by the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies. And he put them all together into ward three days. And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God: if ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses: but bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so. And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish in his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes. Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth. And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their

heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us? And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying, The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies: we be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone: and bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffic in the land. And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me. And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hands, and I will bring him to thee again. And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

And the famine was sore in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy a little food. And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt see

our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down? And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame forever: for except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time. And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds: and take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight: take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved. And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon. And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house;

and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondsmen, and our asses. And they came near to the steward Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house, and said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food: and it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight, and we have brought it again in our hand. And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks. And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God and the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them. And the man brought his brethren into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender. And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon for they heard that they should eat bread there. And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there. And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. And they set for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for

the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians. And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marveled one at another. And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing. And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words. And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing: behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen. And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless. Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent

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their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city. And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found. And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and for you, get you up in peace unto your father. Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Come again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot come down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we come down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I have not seen him since: and if ye take this also from me, and

mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father forever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing¹ nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land

¹ Plowing.

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of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: and there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; let me and my household, and all that thou hast, come unto thee, lest we perish by reason of the poverty. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him. And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, Thus do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; and take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring ye your father, and come. Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours. And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment. And to his father he sent after this manner: ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat

his father by the way. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way. And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: and Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go down and see him before I die.

And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him: his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt. And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.

Alphonse Daudet

MY childhood was passed in a large provincial town which is bisected by a river crowded with crafts, and full of stir and bustle; there I acquired while still young a fondness for voyages, and the passion for a nautical life. There is one especial corner of the quay, near a certain footbridge, Saint Vincent it is called, and I never think of it, even to-day, without emotion. I remember that sign nailed to the end of the quay, "CORNET, BOATS TO LET," the little staircase which went down even to the water, slippery and black from frequent wettings, the flotilla of little boats, freshly painted with gay colors, standing in a row at the foot of the ladder, rocking gently side by side, as if the charming names which decorated the sterns in white letters, THE HUMMING BIRD, THE SWALLOW, really lent the boats themselves new buoyancy.

Long oars glistening with white paint were drying against the wall, and among them walked Father Cornet with his paint-pot and big paint-brushes; his face was tanned, furrowed, and wrinkled with innumerable tiny depressions, like the river itself when an evening breeze springs up. O Father Cornet! That worthy man was the tempter of my childhood, my joy and sorrow combined, my sin, my remorse. How many crimes he led me to commit with those boats of his! I played truant from school, I sold my books. What would I not have sold for an afternoon's boating!

All my exercise-books at the bottom of the boat, my jacket off, my hat pushed back, a delicious breeze from the water

¹ The translation is the property of Little, Brown & Company, by which it is published in Daudet's *Monday Tales*, and through special arrangement with whom it is here reprinted.

fanning my hair, I pulled the oars firmly, my brows knitted in a frown, trying to cultivate the air of an old sea-dog. As long as I was in the town I kept to the middle of the river, at equal distance from either bank, where the old sea-dog might have been recognized! What a sense of triumph I felt, mingling with the movement of boats and rafts and floats loaded with wood, steamboats moving side by side, but never touching each other, though separated merely by a slender strip of foam! And then there were heavier boats which had to turn about to follow the current, while a host of smaller ones were obliged to move out of their way.

Suddenly the wheels of a steamboat would begin to churn the water around me; a huge shadow would loom above me; it was the bow of a boat loaded with apples. "Look out, youngster," a hoarse voice shouted; dripping with perspiration, I tugged away, entangled in that current of life upon the river which mingled incessantly with the life of the street at every bridge and footbridge, while reflections from passing omnibuses darkened the water as I pulled my oars.

The current of the river was very strong about the arches of the bridge, and there were such eddies, such whirlpools, among them that famous one to which the name of "Death the Deceiver" had been given. You can understand that it was no light matter for a child to pilot himself through that part of the river, pulling with the arms of a twelve-year-old, and no one to hold the rudder.

Sometimes I chanced to encounter the chain. As quickly as possible I would catch on to the end of the line of boats as it was tugged along, and letting my oars lie motionless, spread like wings about to alight, I allowed myself to be borne onward by that swift, silent movement which broke the river's surface into long ribbons of foam, while the trees along the bank and the houses upon the quay glided by us. A long, long distance ahead I could hear the monotonous turning of

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the screw, and on one of the boats, where a tiny thread of smoke was rising from a low chimney, I could hear a dog bark; at such times I really fancied that I was aboard ship and off for a long cruise.

Unfortunately, those meetings with that line of boats were rare. Most of the time I rowed and rowed, through the hours when the sun was hottest. Oh, that noonday sun beating straight down upon the river; I can still seem to feel it burning me! Everything glistened beneath those fiery rays. In that dazzling, sonorous atmosphere, which rested, a floating mass, above the waves, and vibrated with their every movement, the short strokes of my oars, and the tow-lines raised dripping from the water, would dart vivid gleams, as from some surface of polished silver. Then I would close my eyes while I rowed on. From the energy of my efforts and the bound of the waves beneath my boat, I thought for the moment that I must be moving very rapidly, but upon raising my head to look, I was sure to see the same tree, the same wall facing me from the river-bank.

At last, completely exhausted, covered with perspiration, crimson with heat, I succeeded in leaving the city behind me. The din that came from bath-houses, washerwomen's boats and boat-landings, grew fainter; the bridges were farther apart upon the widening river. A few suburban gardens and factory chimney were reflected here and there. On the horizon the fringe of verdant islands fluttered, and now, unable to go any farther, I would pull close to the bank; there, in the midst of reeds buzzing with life, overcome with the sun's fatigue and that oppressive heat which rose from the water dotted with great yellow flowers, the old sea-dog would have an attack of the nose-bleed, which lasted for hours. My voyage always ended with that catastrophe; but then—one must not ask too much! Delightful enough these excursions were to me.

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But the terrible part was the return, the moment when I must enter the house. No matter how fast I pulled the oars as I rowed homeward, I always arrived too late, and long after school was out. Impressed with the decline of day, the sight of the first few gas-lights twinkling through the mist, the Soldiers' Retreat, my apprehension and remorse grew ever greater as I neared home. I envied the people I met, tranquilly turning homeward. My head dull and heavy, full of the effect of sun and water, a murmur of sea-shells in my ears, I ran on, my face already reddening with the lie I was about to tell.

For on each occasion it was necessary to confront that terrible "Where were you?" which awaited me upon the threshold. It was that question which terrified me most, upon my home-coming. Standing upon the stairs I must answer upon the spur of the moment, and always have a story ready, something to say so astounding, so overwhelming, that surprise must cut short all further questioning. This left me time to enter, to regain breath. And for the sake of that moment I counted no cost too dear. I invented sinister events, revolutions, terrible things; one whole side of the city was burning, the railway bridge had collapsed and fallen into the river! But the most startling of all my inventions was the following.

One evening I reached home very late. My mother, who had awaited me a whole hour, was on the watch, standing at the head of the stairway.

"Where have you been?" she exclaimed.

Tell me who can from what source children obtain the impish ideas that enter their heads. I had prepared no excuse, discovered none,—for I had returned too quickly. Suddenly a wild thought occurred to me. I knew that dear mother was very pious, most zealous of Roman Catholics, and I answered her with the breathless haste born of a deep emotion,—

"Oh, mamma! If you knew!"

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"Knew what? Has anything happened?"

"The pope is dead."

"The pope is dead!" repeated my poor mother, and very pale she leaned against the wall.

I passed quickly into my own room, somewhat frightened at my success, and the enormity of the lie; and yet I had the courage to persist in it to the end. I still remember that subdued funereal evening; my father looked very grave, my mother was prostrated. They talked around the table in low voices. I kept my eyes lowered all the while; but my escapade had been so completely forgotten in the general sorrow that no one thought further of it.

Each one was pleased to call to mind some virtuous trait of that poor Pius IX; then, by degrees, the conversation wandered, and reverted to Papal History. Aunt Rose began to speak of Pius VII, whom she recalled very well, having seen him when he passed through the Midi, in the back of a post-chaise, between gendarmes. They recalled that famous scene with the Emperor: *Comédiantes! . . . tragédiantes! . . .* For the hundredth time I heard them describe that terrible scene, ever with the same intonations, the same gestures, with all those stereotyped expressions which are a part of family tradition, as such bequeathed to the next generation, remaining with it, and like some monastic history, preserving all their puerilities and localisms.

Nevertheless, the incident never appeared to me more interesting than upon this occasion.

With hypocritical sighs, with questionings, and an assumption of interest, I listened to every word, but all the time I was thinking to myself,—

"To-morrow morning, when they learn the pope is not dead they will be so glad that no one will have the heart to scold me."

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And as I thought of that, my eyes closed in spite of my efforts to keep them open, and visions of tiny boats, painted blue, appeared, and every nook along the Saône drowsing beneath the heat, and *argyronètes*¹ darting forth their long feet in every direction, cutting the glassy water like diamond-points.

¹ Small water animals.

George Eliot

TOM TULLIVER, a lad of thirteen, the son of Tulliver of Dorlcote Mill, has this moment arrived home from boarding-school, after a considerable absence, and, the first greetings over, is proceeding to take his sister Maggie into his confidence. Maggie is a child of nine, of an impulsive, affectionate, intense nature. Other persons mentioned in the scene are Luke, the head miller, and Harry, another employee of the family.

Maggie has a painful burden on her mind. She forgot the rabbits which Tom had asked her to feed, and now they are dead.

"Maggie," said Tom, confidentially, taking her into corner as soon as his mother was gone out to examine the box, and the warm parlor had taken off the chill he had felt from the long drive, "you don't know what I've got in my pockets," nodding his head up and down as a means of rousing her sense of mystery.

"No," said Maggie. "How stodgy they look, Tom! Is it marls [marbles] or cobnuts?" Maggie's heart sank a little because Tom always said it was "no good" playing with marls at those games—she played so badly.

"Marls! no; I've swopped all my marls with the little fellows, and cobnuts are no fun, you silly, only when the nuts are green. But see here!" He drew something half an inch out of his right-hand pocket.

¹ From *The Mill on the Floss*.

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"What is it?" said Maggie, in a whisper. "I can see nothing but a bit of yellow."

"Why, it's . . . a . . . new . . . guess, Maggie."

"Oh, I *can't* guess, Tom," said Maggie, impatiently.

"Don't be a spitfire, else I won't tell you," said Tom, thrusting his hand back into his pocket, and looking determined.

"No, Tom," said Maggie, imploringly, laying hold of the arm that was held stiffly in the pocket. "I'm not cross, Tom; it was only because I can't bear guessing. *Please* be good to me."

Tom's arm slowly relaxed, and he said, "Well, then, it's a new fish-line—two new uns—one for you, Maggie, all to yourself. I wouldn't go halves in the toffee¹ and gingerbread on purpose to save the money; and Gibson and Spouncer fought with me because I wouldn't. And here's hooks—see here! . . . I say, *won't* we go and fish to-morrow down by Round Pool? And you shall catch your own fish, Maggie, and put the worms on, and everything: won't it be fun?"

Maggie's answer was to throw her arms around Tom's neck and hug him, and hold her cheek against his without speaking, while he slowly unwound some of the line, saying after a pause,

"Wasn't I a good brother, now, to buy you a line all to yourself? You know, I needn't have bought it if I hadn't liked."

"Yes, very, very good . . . I *do* love you, Tom."

Tom had put the line back in his pocket, and was looking at the hooks one by one before he spoke again.

"And the fellows fought me because I wouldn't give in about the toffee."

"Oh dear! I wish they wouldn't fight at your school, Tom. Didn't it hurt you?"

"Hurt me? No," said Tom, putting up the hooks again, taking out a large pocket-knife, and slowly opening the largest

¹ Taffy.

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blade, which he looked at meditatively as he rubbed his finger along it. Then he added,

"I gave Spouncer a black eye, I know—that's what he got by wanting to leather *me*; I wasn't going to go halves because anybody leathered me."

"Oh, how brave you are, Tom! I think you're like Samson. If there came a lion roaring at me, I think you'd fight him—wouldn't you, Tom?"

"How can a lion come roaring at you, you silly thing? There's no lions only in the shows."

"No; but if we were in the lion countries—I mean, in Africa, where it's very hot—the lions eat people there. I can show it you in the book where I read it."

"Well, I should get a gun and shoot him."

"But if you hadn't got a gun—we might have gone out, you know, not thinking, just as we go fishing; and then a great lion might run toward us roaring, and we couldn't get away from him. What should you do, Tom?"

Tom paused, and at last turned away contemptuously, saying: "But the lion *isn't* coming. What's the use of talking?"

"But I like to fancy how it would be," said Maggie, following him. "Just think what you would do, Tom."

"Oh, don't bother, Maggie! you're such a silly—I shall go and see my rabbits."

Maggie's heart began to flutter with fear. She dared not tell the sad truth at once, but she walked after Tom in trembling silence as he went out, thinking how she could tell him the news so as to soften at once his sorrow and his anger for Maggie dreaded Tom's anger of all things—it was quite a different anger from her own.

"Tom," she said, timidly, when they were out of doors, "how much money did you give for your rabbits?"

"Two half crowns and a sixpence," said Tom, promptly.

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"I think I've got a great deal more than that in my steel purse upstairs. I'll ask mother to give it you."

"What for?" said Tom. "I don't want *your* money, you silly thing. I've got a great deal more money than you, because I'm a boy. I always have half sovereigns and sovereigns for my Christmas boxes, because I shall be a man, and you only have five-shilling pieces, because you're only a girl."

"Well, but, Tom—if mother would let me give you two half crowns and a sixpence out of my purse to put into your pocket to spend, you know, and buy some more rabbits with it?"

"More rabbits? I don't want any more."

"Oh, but, Tom, they're all dead."

Tom stopped immediately in his walk and turned round toward Maggie. "You forgot to feed 'em, then, and Harry forgot?" he said, his color heightening for a moment, but soon subsiding. "I'll pitch into Harry—I'll have him turned away. And I don't love you, Maggie. You sha'n't go fishing with me to-morrow. I told you to go and see the rabbits every day." He walked on again.

"Yes, but I forgot—and I couldn't help it, indeed, Tom. I'm so very sorry," said Maggie, while the tears rushed fast.

"You're a naughty girl," said Tom, severely, "and I'm sorry I bought you the fish-line. I don't love you."

"Oh, Tom, it's very cruel," sobbed Maggie. "I'd forgive you if *you* forgot anything—I wouldn't mind what you did—I'd forgive you and love you."

"Yes, you're a silly; but I never *do* forget things—I don't."

"Oh, please forgive me, Tom; my heart will break," said Maggie, shaking with sobs, clinging to Tom's arm, and laying her wet cheek on his shoulder.

Tom shook her off, and stopped again, saying in a peremptory tone, "Now, Maggie, you just listen. Aren't I a good brother to you?"

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"Ye-ye-es," sobbed Maggie, her chin rising and falling convulsively.

"Didn't I think about your fish-line all this quarter, and mean to buy it, and saved my money o' purpose, and wouldn't go halves in the toffee, and Spouncer fought me because wouldn't?"

"Ye-ye-es . . . and I . . . lo-lo-love you so, Tom."

"But you're a naughty girl. Last holidays you licked the paint off my lozenge-box, and the holidays before that you let the boat drag my fish-line down when I set you to watch it, and you pushed your head through my kite, all for nothing."

"But I didn't mean," said Maggie; "I couldn't help it."

"Yes, you could," said Tom, "if you'd minded what you were doing. And you're a naughty girl, and you sha'n't go fishing with me to-morrow."

With this terrible conclusion, Tom ran away from Maggie toward the mill, meaning to greet Luke there, and complacently to him of Harry.

Maggie stood motionless, except from her sobs, for a minute or two; then she turned round and ran into the house and up to her attic, where she sat on the floor, and laid her head against the worm-eaten shelf, with a crushing sense of misery. Tom was come home, and she had thought he would be happy she should be, and now he was cruel to her. What was anything if Tom didn't love her? Oh, he was very cruel! Hadn't she wanted to give him the money, and said how very sorry she was? She knew she was naughty to her mother, but she had never been naughty to Tom—had never *meant* to be naughty to him.

"Oh, he is cruel!" Maggie sobbed aloud, finding a wretched pleasure in the hollow resonance that came through the lonely empty space of the attic. She never thought of beating; grinding her Fetish;¹ she was too miserable to be angry.

¹ Her doll, which she had the habit of punishing for all her misfortunes.

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These bitter sorrows of childhood! when sorrow is all new and strange, when hope has not yet got wings to fly beyond the days and weeks, and the space from summer to summer seems measureless.

Maggie soon thought she had been hours in the attic, and it must be tea time, and they were all having their tea, and not thinking of her. Well, then, she would stay up there and starve herself—hide herself behind the tub, and stay there all night; and then they would all be frightened, and Tom would be sorry. Thus Maggie thought in the pride of her heart, as she crept behind the tub; but presently she began to cry again at the idea that they didn't mind her being there. If she went down again to Tom now, would he forgive her? Perhaps her father would be there, and he would take her part. But, then, she wanted Tom to forgive her because he loved her, not because his father told him. No, she would never go down if Tom didn't come to fetch her. This resolution lasted in great intensity for five dark minutes behind the tub; but then the need of being loved, the strongest need in poor Maggie's nature, began to wrestle with her pride, and soon threw it. She crept from behind her tub into the twilight of the long attic, but just then she heard a quick footstep on the stairs.

Tom had been too much interested in his talk with Luke, in going the round of the premises, walking in and out where he pleased, and whittling sticks without any particular reason, except that he didn't whittle sticks at school, to think of Maggie and the effect his anger had produced on her. He meant to punish her, and that business having been performed, he occupied himself with other matters, like a practical person. But when he had been called in to tea, his father said, "Why, where's the little wench?" and Mrs. Tulliver, almost at the same moment, said, "Where's your little sister?" both of them

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having supposed that Maggie and Tom had been together all the afternoon.

"I don't know," said Tom. He didn't want to "tell" on Maggie, though he was angry with her; for Tom Tulliver was a lad of honor.

"What! hasn't she been playing with you all this while?" said the father. "She'd been thinking o' nothing but you coming home."

"I haven't seen her this two hours," says Tom, commencing on the plum-cake.

"Goodness heart! she's got drowned," exclaimed Mrs. Tulliver, rising from her seat and running to the window. "How could you let her do so?" she added, as became a fearful woman, accusing she didn't know whom of she didn't know what.

"Nay, nay, she's none drowned," said Mr. Tulliver. "You've been naughty to her, I doubt, Tom?"

"I'm sure I haven't, father," said Tom, indignantly. "I think she's in the house."

"Perhaps up in that attic," said Mrs. Tulliver, "a-singing and talking to herself, and forgetting all about meal times."

"You go and fetch her down, Tom," said Mr. Tulliver, rather sharply, his perspicacity or his fatherly fondness for Maggie making him suspect that the lad had been rather hard upon "the little un," else she would never have left his side. "And be good to her, do you hear? else I'll let you know better."

Tom never disobeyed his father, for Mr. Tulliver was a peremptory man, and, as he said, would never let anybody get hold of his whip-hand; but he went out rather sullenly, carrying his piece of plum-cake, and not intending to reprove Maggie's punishment, which was no more than she deserved. Tom was only thirteen, and had no decided views in grammar and arithmetic, regarding them for the most part as op

questions, but he was particularly clear and positive on one point, namely, that he would punish everybody who deserved it; why, he wouldn't have minded being punished himself, if he deserved it; but, then, he never *did* deserve it.

It was Tom's step, then, that Maggie heard on the stairs when her need of love had triumphed over her pride, and she was going down with her swollen eyes and disheveled hair to beg for pity. At least her father would stroke her head and say, "Never mind, my wench." It is a wonderful subduer, this need of love—this hunger of the heart—as peremptory as that other hunger by which Nature forces us to submit to the yoke, and change the face of the world.

But she knew Tom's step, and her heart began to beat violently with the sudden shock of hope. He only stood still at the top of the stairs and said, "Maggie, you're to come down." But she rushed to him and clung around his neck, sobbing, "Oh, Tom, please forgive me—I can't bear it—I will always be good—always remember things—do love me—please, dear Tom!"

We learn to restrain ourselves as we get older. We keep apart when we have quarreled, express ourselves in well-bred phrases, and in this way preserve a dignified alienation, showing much firmness on one side, and swallowing much grief on the other. We no longer approximate in our behavior to the mere impulsiveness of the lower animals, but conduct ourselves in every respect like members of a highly civilized society. Maggie and Tom were still very much like young animals, and so she could rub her cheek against his, and kiss his ear in a random, sobbing way; and there were tender fibers in the lad that had been used to answer to Maggie's fondling, so that he behaved with a weakness quite inconsistent with his resolution to punish her as much as she deserved: he actually began to kiss her in return, and say,

"Don't cry, then, Magsie—here, eat a bit o' cake."

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Maggie's sobs began to subside, and she put out her mouth for the cake and bit a piece; and then Tom bit a piece, just for company; and they ate together, and rubbed each other's cheeks, and brows, and noses together, while they ate, with a humiliating resemblance to two friendly ponies.

"Come along, Magsie, and have tea," said Tom at last, when there was no more cake except what was downstairs.

So ended the sorrows of this day, and the next morning Maggie was trotting with her own fishing-rod in one hand and a handle of the basket in the other, stepping always, by a peculiar gift, in the muddiest places, and looking darkly radiant from under her beaver bonnet because Tom was good to her.

Jane Austen

MR. COLLINS, a young clergyman of five-and-twenty, rector of Hunsford, is visiting at Longbourn, the home of his cousins the Bennets. His easy circumstances, together with the gracious advice of his patroness, the Lady Catherine de Bourgh, have induced him to think of marriage; and since he is to inherit Longbourn on the death of its present proprietor, and so dispossess the surviving members of the family, it has seemed to him peculiarly fitting that he should confer his hand upon one or another of Mr. Bennet's five daughters. His first choice was the eldest, Jane, but on learning that she is likely soon to be engaged to another, he transfers his affections to Elizabeth. He has lately honored his second choice with unmistakable attentions, and now approaches the climax of his suit. As to Mrs. Bennet, only one thing need be said: the business of her life is to get her daughters married.

Mr. Collins made his declaration in form. Having resolved to do it without loss of time, as his leave of absence extended only to the following Saturday, and having no feelings of diffidence to make it distressing to himself even at the moment, he set about it in a very orderly manner, with all the observances, which he supposed a regular part of the business. On finding Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth, and

¹ From *Pride and Prejudice*.

one of the younger girls together, soon after breakfast, he addressed the mother in these words: "May I hope, madam, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honor of a private audience with her in the course of this morning?"

Before Elizabeth had time for anything but a blush of surprise, Mrs. Bennet instantly answered, "Oh dear!—Yes—certainly. I am sure Lizzy will be very happy—I am sure she can have no objection. Come, Kitty, I want you upstairs." And, gathering her work together, she was hastening away, when Elizabeth called out,

"Dear ma'am, do not go. I beg you will not go. Mr. Collins must excuse me. He can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear. I am going away myself."

"No, no, nonsense, Lizzy. I desire you will stay where you are." And upon Elizabeth's seeming really, with vexed and embarrassed looks, about to escape, she added, "Lizzy, *insist* upon your staying and hearing Mr. Collins."

Elizabeth would not oppose such an injunction—and a moment's consideration making her also sensible that it would be wisest to get it over as soon and as quietly as possible, she sat down again, and tried to conceal, by incessant employment, the feelings which were divided between distress and diversion. Mrs. Bennet and Kitty walked off, and as soon as they were gone Mr. Collins began.

"Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there *not* been this little unwillingness; but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble; my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you

out as the companion of my future life. But, before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it will be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying—and, moreover, for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did.”

The idea of Mr. Collins, with all his solemn composure, being run away with by his feelings, made Elizabeth so near laughing that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt to stop him further, and he continued:

“My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and, thirdly—which, perhaps, I ought to have mentioned earlier—that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honor of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked, too!) on this subject; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford—between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss de Bourgh’s footstool—that she said: ‘Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. Choose properly, choose a gentlewoman, for *my* sake; and for your *own*, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her.’ Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe; and your wit and vivacity I think must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in

favor of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighborhood, where, I assure you, there are many amiable young women. But, the fact is, that being as I am to inherit this estate after the death of your honored father (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible, when the melancholy event takes place—which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now, nothing remains for me but to assure you, in the most animated language, of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the four per cents, which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married."

It was absolutely necessary to interrupt him now.

"You are too hasty, sir," she cried. "You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without further loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honor of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them."

"I am not now to learn," replied Mr. Collins, with a formal wave of the hand, "that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favor; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third time. I am, therefore, by no means discouraged by what

you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long."

"Upon my word, sir," cried Elizabeth, "your hope is rather an extraordinary one, after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so. Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation."

"Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so," said Mr. Collins, very gravely—"but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disapprove of you. And you may be certain that when I have the honor of seeing her again I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications."

"Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say. I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand, do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family, and may take possession of Longbourn estate whenever it falls, without any self-reproach. This matter may be considered, therefore, as finally settled." And rising as she thus spoke, she would have quitted the room, had not Mr. Collins thus addressed her:

"When I do myself the honor of speaking to you next on the subject, I shall hope to receive a more favorable answer than you have now given me; though I am far from accusing you of cruelty at present, because I know it to be the established custom of your sex to reject a man on the first application;

and, perhaps, you have even now said as much to encourage me in my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character."

"Really, Mr. Collins," cried Elizabeth, with some warmth, "you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one."

"You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses is merely words of course. My reasons for believing it are briefly these: It does not appear to me that my hand is unworthy your acceptance, or that the establishment I can offer would be any other than highly desirable. My situation in life, my connections with the family of De Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favor; and you should take it into further consideration that, in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you. Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must therefore conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense according to the usual practice of elegant females."

"I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretensions whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honor you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart."

"You are uniformly charming!" cried he, with an air

awkward gallantry; "and I am persuaded that when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents my proposals will not fail of being acceptable."

To such perseverance in willful self-deception Elizabeth would make no reply, and immediately and in silence withdrew, determined, if he persisted in considering her repeated refusals as flattering encouragement, to apply to her father, whose negative might be uttered in such a manner as must be decisive, and whose behavior at least could not be mistaken for the affectation and coquetry of an elegant female.

Le Sage

GIL BLAS, a well-educated though inexperienced youth, has for some time been wandering about the world in pursuit of fortune. He has learned much of human nature, — but still has much to learn. Don Fernando, an influential friend, nephew to the Archbishop of Granada, offers, in the opening sentences of the narrative, to recommend him as private secretary to his grace.

Gil Blas is at once the hero and narrator of the tale.

“My Lord Archbishop of Granada, my relation a friend, is in want of a young man with some little tin of literature, who can write a good hand and make f copies of his manuscripts; for he is a great author. has composed I know not how many homilies, and still g on composing more every day, which he delivers to the h edification of his audience. As you seem to be just the th for him, I have mentioned your name, and he has pro ised to take you. Go, and make your bow to him as fr me; you will judge, by his reception of you, whether recommendation has been couched in handsome terms.”

The situation was, to all appearance, exactly what I sho have picked out for myself. That being the case, with s an arrangement of my air and person as seemed most lik

¹ From *Gil Blas*. Translated by Tobias Smollett. Omissions are noted.

to square with the ideas of a reverend prelate, I presented myself one morning before the archbishop. That prelate was in his sixty-ninth year, formed nearly on the model of my uncle, Gil Perez the canon, which is as much as to say, as broad as he was long. But the highest dignitaries should always be the most amply gifted; accordingly his legs bowed inwards to the very extremity of the graceful curve, and his bald head retained but a single lock behind: so that he was obliged to ensconce his pericranium in a fine woolen cap with long ears. In spite of all this, I espied the man of quality in his deportment, doubtless because I knew that he actually happened to be one. We common fellows, the fungous growth of the human dunghill, look up to great lords with a facility of being overawed, which often furnishes them with a Benjamin's mess of importance,¹ when nature has denied even the most scanty and trivial gifts.

The archbishop kindly inquired what I wanted. I told him I was the young man about whom Signor Don Ferdinand de Leyva had spoken to him. He did not give me a moment to go on with my story. "Ah! is it you," exclaimed he—"is it you of whom so fine a character has been given me? I take you into my service at once; you are a mine of literary utility to me. You have only to take up your abode here."

He took me with him into his closet for a little private conference. I could not but suppose that he meant to fathom the depth of my understanding. I was accordingly on my guard, and prepared to measure out my words most methodically. He questioned me first in the classics. My answers were not amiss; he was convinced that I had more than a schoolboy's acquaintance with the Greek and Latin writers. He examined me next in logic; nor could I but suppose that he would examine me in logic. He found me strong enough

¹ That is, with a disproportionate amount. (See *The Story of Joseph*, above, p. 763.)

there. "Your education," said he, with some degree of surprise, "has not been neglected. Now let us see your hand writing." I took a blank piece of paper out of my pocket which I had brought for the purpose. My ghostly father was not displeased with my performance. "I am very well satisfied with the mechanical part of your qualifications," exclaimed he, "and still more so with the powers of your mind. I shall thank my nephew, Don Ferdinand, most heartily, for having sent me so fine a lad; it is absolutely a gift from above."

At dinner I was seated by the side of an old valet-de-chambre, by name Melchior de la Ronda. He took care to help me to all the nice bits. His attentions were not lost upon me, and my good manners quite enraptured him. "Most worthy sir," said he, in a low voice after dinner, "I should like to have a little private talk with you." At the same time he led the way to a part of the palace where we could not be overheard, and there addressed me as follows: "My son, from the very first instant that I saw you, I felt a certain prepossession in your favor. Of this I will give you a certain proof by communicating in confidence what will be of great service to you. You are here in a family where true believers and painted hypocrites are playing at cross-purposes against each other. It would take an antediluvian age to feel the ground under your feet. I will spare so long and so disgusting study, by letting you into the characters on both sides. After this, if you do not play your cards, it is your own fault.

"I shall begin with his grace. He is a very pious prelate employed without ceasing in the instruction of the people whom he brings back to virtue, like sheep gone astray, sermons full of excellent morality, and written by himself. He has retired from court these twenty years, to watch over his flock with the zeal of an affectionate pastor. He is a very learned person, and a very impressive declaimer: his whole delight is in preaching, and his congregation take care

he should know that their whole delight is in hearing him. There may possibly be some little leaven of vanity in all this heavenly-mindedness; but, besides that it is not for human fallibility to search the heart, it would ill become me to rake into the faults of a person whose bread I eat. Were it decent to lay my finger on anything unbecoming in my master, I should discommend his starchness. Instead of exercising forbearance towards frail churchmen, he visits every peccadillo, as if it were a heinous offense. Above all, he prosecutes those with the utmost rigor of the spiritual court, who, wrapping themselves up in their innocence, appeal to the canons for their justification, in bar of his despotic authority. There is besides another awkward trait in his character, common to him with many other people of high rank. Though he is very fond of the people about him, he pays not the least attention to their services, but lets them sink into years without a moment's thought about securing them any provision. If at any time he makes them any little presents, they may thank the goodness of some one who shall have spoken up in their behalf: he would never have his wits enough about him to do the slightest thing for them as a volunteer."

This is just what the old valet-de-chambre told me of his master. Next, he let me into what he thought of the clergymen with whom we had dined. His portraits might be likenesses; but they were too hard-featured to be owned by the originals. It must be admitted, however, that he did not represent them as honest men, but only as very scandalous priests. Nevertheless, he made some exceptions, and was as loud in their praises as in his censure of the others. I was no longer at any loss how to play my part so as to put myself on an equal footing with these gentry. That very evening, at supper, I took a leaf out of their book, and arrayed myself in the convenient vesture of a wise and prudent outside. A clothing of humility and sanctification costs nothing. Indeed it offers such a pre-

mium to the wearer, that we are not to wonder if this word abounds in a description of people called hypocrites.

I had been after dinner to get together my baggage, and take my horse from the inn where I had put up, and afterwards returned to supper at the archbishop's palace, where a neat furnished room was got ready for me, and such a bed as was more likely to pamper than to mortify the flesh. The day following, his grace sent for me quite as soon as I was ready to go to him. It was to give me a homily to transcribe. He made a point of having it copied with all possible accuracy. It was done to please him; for I omitted neither accent, nor comma, nor the minutest tittle of all he had marked down. His satisfaction at observing this was heightened by its being unexpected. "Eternal Father!" exclaimed he in a holy rapture, when he had glanced his eye over all the folios of my copy, "was ever anything seen so correct? You are too good a transcriber not to have some little smattering of the grammarian. Now tell me with the freedom of a friend: in writing it over, have you been struck with nothing that grated upon your feelings? Some little careless idiom, or some word used in an improper sense?" "Oh! may it please your grace," answered I with a modest air, "it is not for me, with my confined education and coarse taste, to aim at making critical remarks. And though ever so well qualified, I am satisfied that your grace's works would come out pure from the essay." The successor of the apostles smiled at my answer. He made no observation on it; but it was easy to see, through all his piety, that he was an arrant author at the bottom: there is something in that dye, that not heaven itself can wash out.

I seemed to have purchased the fee-simple of his good graces by my flattery. Day after day did I get a step further in his esteem; and Don Ferdinand, who came to see him very often, told me my footing was so firm, that there could not be a doubt but my fortune was made. Of this my master him-

self gave me a proof some little time afterwards: and the occasion was as follows: One evening in his closet he rehearsed before me, with appropriate emphasis and action, a homily which he was to deliver the next day in the cathedral. He did not content himself with asking me what I thought of it in the gross, but insisted on my telling him what passages struck me most. I had the good fortune to pick out those which were nearest to his own taste, his favorite commonplaces. Thus, as luck would have it, I passed in his estimation for a man who had a quick and natural relish of the real and less obvious beauties in a work. "This, indeed," exclaimed he, "is what you may call having discernment and feeling in perfection! Well, well, my friend, it cannot be said of you,

'Bœotum in crasso jurares aëre natum'." ¹

In a word, he was so highly pleased with me, as to add in a tone of extraordinary emotion—"Never mind, Gil Blas! henceforward take no care about hereafter; I shall make it my business to place you among the favored children of my bounty. You have my best wishes; and to prove to you that you have them, I shall take you into my inmost confidence."

These words were no sooner out of his mouth, than I fell at his grace's feet, quite overwhelmed with gratitude. I embraced his elliptical legs with almost pagan idolatry, and considered myself as a man on the highroad to a very handsome fortune. "Yes, my child," resumed the archbishop, whose speech had been cut short by the rapidity of my prostration, "I mean to make you the receiver-general of all my inmost ruminations. Hearken attentively to what I am going to say. I have a great pleasure in preaching. The Lord sheds a blessing on my homilies; they sink deep into the hearts of sinners; set up a glass in which vice sees its own image, and bring back

¹ You would swear he was born in the thick air of Bœotia.

many from the paths of error into the highroad of repentance. What a heavenly sight, when a miser, scared at the hideous picture drawn by my eloquence of his avarice, opens his coffers to the poor and needy, and dispenses the accumulated store with a liberal hand! The voluptuary, too, snatched from the pleasures of the table; ambition flies at my command to the wholesome discipline of the monastic cell, while female frailty, tottering on the brink of ruin, with one ear open to the siren voice of the seducer, and the other to my saintly correctives, is restored to domestic happiness and the approving smile of heaven, by the timely warnings of the pulpit. These miraculous conversions, which happen almost every Sunday, ought of themselves to goad me on in the career of saving souls. Nevertheless, to conceal no part of my weakness from my monitor, there is another reward on which my heart is intent, a reward which the seraphic scrupulousness of my virtue to little purpose condemns as too carnal: a literary reputation for a sublime and elegant style. The honor of being handed down to posterity as a perfect pulpit orator has its irresistible attractions. My compositions are generally thought to be equally powerful and persuasive; but I could wish of all things to steer clear of the rock on which good authors split, who are too long before the public, and to retire from professional life with my reputation in undiminished luster.

"To this end, my dear Gil Blas," continued the prelate, "there is one thing requisite from your zeal and friendship. Whenever it shall strike you that my pen begins to contract, as it were, the ossification of old age, whenever you see my genius in its climacteric, do not fail to give me a hint. There is no trusting to oneself in such a case; pride and conceit were the original sin of man. The probe of criticism must be intrusted to an impartial stander-by, of fine talents and unshaken probity. Both those requisites center in you: you are my choice, and

give myself up to your direction." "Heaven be praised, my lord," said I, "there is no need to trouble yourself with any such thoughts yet. Besides, an understanding of your grace's mold and caliber will last out double the time of a common genius; or to speak with more certainty and truth, it will never be the worse for wear, if you live to the age of Methuselah. I consider you as a second Cardinal Ximenes, whose powers, superior to decay, instead of flagging with years, seemed to derive new vigor from their approximation with the heavenly regions." "No flattery, my friend!" interrupted he. "I know myself to be in danger of failing all at once. At my age one begins to be sensible of infirmities, and those of the body communicate with the mind. I repeat it to you, Gil Blas: as soon as you shall be of opinion that my head is not so clear as usual, give me warning of it instantly. Do not be afraid of offending by frankness and sincerity; to put me in mind of my own frailty will be the strongest proof of your affection for me. Besides, your very interest is concerned in it, for if it should, by any spite of chance towards you, come to my ears that the people say in town, 'His grace's sermons produce no longer their accustomed impression, it is time for him to abandon his pulpit to younger candidates,' I do assure you most seriously and solemnly, you will not only lose my friendship, but the provision for life that I have promised you. Such will be the result of your silly tampering with truth."

Here my patron left off to wait for my answer, which was an echo of his speech, and a promise of obeying him in all things. From that moment there were no secrets from me; I became the prime favorite. All the household, except Melchior de la Ronda, looked at me with an eye of envy. It was curious to observe the manner in which the whole establishment, from the highest to the lowest, thought it necessary to demean themselves towards his grace's confidential secretary; there was no meanness to which they would not stoop to curry

favor with me; I could scarcely believe they were Spaniards. I left no stone unturned to be of service to them, without being taken in by their interested assiduities. My lord archbishop, at my entreaty, took them by the hand. He got a company for one, and fitted him out so as to make a handsome figure in the army. Another he sent to Mexico, with a considerable appointment which he procured him; and I obtained a good slice of his bounty for my friend Melchior. It was evident from these facts, that if the prelate was not particularly active in good works, at least he rarely gave a churlish refusal when anyone had the courage to importune him for his benevolence.

While I was thus rendering myself a blessing first to one and then to the other, Don Ferdinand de Leyva was making his arrangements for leaving Granada. I called on that nobleman before his departure, to thank him once more for the advantageous post he had procured me. My expressions of satisfaction were so lively, that he said, "My dear Gil Blas, I am delighted to find you in such good humor with my uncle the archbishop." "I am absolutely in love with him," answered I. "His goodness to me has been such as I can never sufficiently acknowledge."

Two months after this worthy gentleman had left us, in the luxuriant harvest of my highest favor, a lowering storm came suddenly over the episcopal palace; the archbishop had a stroke of apoplexy. By dint of immediate applications and good nursing, in a few days there was no bodily appearance of disease remaining. But his reverend intellects did not so easily recover from their lethargy. I could not help observing it to myself in the very first discourse that he composed. Yet there was not such a wide gap between the merits of the present and the former ones, as to warrant the inference that the sun of oratory was many degrees advanced in its post

meridian course. A second homily was worth waiting for; because that would clearly determine the line of my conduct. Alas, and well-a-day! when that second homily came, it was a knockdown argument. Sometimes the good prelate moved forward, and sometimes he moved backwards; sometimes he mounted up into the garret, and sometimes dipped down into the cellar. It was a composition of more sound than meaning, something like a superannuated schoolmaster's theme, when he attempts to give his boys more sense than he possesses of his own, or like a capuchin's sermon, which only scatters a few artificial flowers of paltry rhetoric over a barren desert of doctrine.

I was not the only person whom the alteration struck. The audience at large, when he delivered it, as if they too had been pledged to watch the advances of dotage, said to one another in a whisper all round the church, "Here is a sermon with symptoms of apoplexy in every paragraph." "Come, my good Coryphæus of the public taste in homilies," said I then to myself, "prepare to do your office. You see that my lord archbishop is going very fast—you ought to warn him of it, not only as his bosom friend, on whose sincerity he relies, but lest some blunt fellow should anticipate you, and bolt out the truth in an offensive manner. In that case you know the consequence; you would be struck out of his will."

But as reason, like Janus, looks at things with two faces, I began to consider the other side of the question; the hint seemed difficult to wrap up so as to make it palatable. Authors in general are stark mad on the subject of their own works, and such an author might be more testy than the common herd of the irritable race: but that suspicion seemed illiberal on my part, for it was impossible that my freedom should be taken amiss, when it had been forced upon me by so positive an injunction. Add to this, that I reckoned upon handling the

subject skillfully, and cramming discretion down his throat like a high-seasoned epicurean dish. After all my protestations, finding that I risked more by keeping silence than by breaking it, I determined to venture on the delicate duty of speaking my mind.

Now there was but one difficulty; a difficulty indeed! How to open the business. Luckily the orator himself extricated me from that embarrassment, by asking what they said of him in the world at large, and whether people were tolerably well pleased with his last discourse. I answered that there could be but one opinion about his homilies; but that it should seem as if the last had not quite struck home to the hearts of the audience, like those which had gone before. "Do you really mean what you say, my friend?" replied he, with a sort of wriggling surprise. "Then my congregation are more in the temper of Aristarchus than of Longinus!"¹ "No, may it please your grace," rejoined I, "quite the contrary. Performances of that order are above the reach of vulgar criticism: they are not a soul but expect to be saved by their influence. Nevertheless, since you have made it my duty to be sincere and reserved, I shall take the liberty of just stating that your discourse is not written with quite the overpowering eloquence and conclusive argument of your former ones. Does not your grace feel just as I do on the subject?"

This ignorant and stupid frankness of mine completely blanched my master's cheek; but he forced a fretful smile and said, "Then, good Master Gil Blas, that piece does exactly hit your fancy?" "I did not mean to say that, your grace," interrupted I, looking very foolish. "It is very superior to what anyone else could produce, though a little below par with respect to your own works in general." "I know what you mean," replied he. "You think I am go-

¹ Ancient critics (see above, p. 284, footnote, and pp. 402-404). Archbishop probably thinks of Aristarchus (or *Aristarch*) as captiously finding, and of Longinus as enthusiastically appreciative.

downhill, do not you? Out with it at once. It is your opinion that it is time for me to think of retiring?" "I should never have had the presumption," said I, "to deliver myself with so little reserve, if it had not been your grace's express command. I act in entire obedience to your grace's orders; and I most obsequiously implore your grace not to take offense at my boldness." "I were unfit to live in a Christian land," interrupted he, with stammering impatience—"I were unfit to live in a Christian land if I liked you the less for such a Christian virtue as sincerity. A man who does not love sincerity sets his face against the distinguishing mark between a friend and a flatterer. I should have given you infinite credit for speaking what you thought, if you had thought anything that deserved to be spoken. I have been finely taken in by your outside show of cleverness, without any solid foundation of sober judgment!"

Though completely unhorsed, and at the enemy's mercy, I wanted to make terms of decent capitulation, and to go unmolested into winter quarters: but let those who think to appease an exasperated author, and especially an author whose ear has been long attuned to the music of his own praises, take warning by my fate. "Let us talk no more on the subject, my very young friend," said he. "You are as yet scarcely in the rudiments of good taste, and utterly incompetent to distinguish between gold and tinsel. You are yet to learn that I never in all my life composed a finer homily than that unfortunate one which had not the honor of your approbation. The immortal part of me, by the blessing of heaven on me and my congregation, is less weighed down by human infirmity than when the flesh was stronger. We all grow wiser as we grow older, and I shall in future select the people about me with more caution; nor submit the castigation of my works but to a much abler critic than yourself. Get about your

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business!" pursued he, giving me an angry shove by the shoulders out of his closet; "go and tell my treasurer to pay to you a hundred ducats, and take my priestly blessing in addition to that sum. God speed you, good Master Gil Blas! I heartily pray that you may do well in the world! There is nothing to stand in your way, but the want of a little better taste."

William Dean Howells

MRS. DURGIN, a widow, with the assistance of her son Jackson and of a young woman named Cynthia Whitwell, keeps a summer hotel. Her ambition centers in the career of a second son, Jeff, her heart being firmly set on his completing a course at Harvard, going on into law, and so rising to a station in life above that of his birth. Jeff, on his part, responds very imperfectly to his mother's hopes. He has spent three rather profitless years at college, and still the only occupation that really interests him is managing a hotel. He has made up his mind against studying law, and had in fact meant to say as much when he told his mother of his engagement to Cynthia, but, to his surprise, she was displeased with his humble choice of a wife, and he did not find the necessary courage to do so. The omission was characteristic and significant. The "next morning" of the first sentence is the morning after Jeff's announcement of his intention with regard to Cynthia. West-over appears through a great part of the novel as a confidant of the Durgin family.

Mrs. Durgin and Cynthia did not seek any formal meeting the next morning. The course of their work brought them together, but it was not till after they had transacted several

¹ From *The Landlord at Lion's Head*. Copyright, 1897, by Harper & Brothers; copyright, 1925, by Mildred Howells and John Mead Howells (renewal). Reprinted through special arrangement.

household affairs of pressing importance that Mrs. Durgin asked: "What's this about you and Jeff?"

"Has he been telling you?" asked Cynthia, in her turn, though she knew he had.

"Yes," said Mrs. Durgin, with a certain dryness, which was half humorous. "I presume, if you two are satisfied, it's all right."

"I guess we're satisfied," said the girl, with a tremor of relief which she tried to hide.

Nothing more was said, and there was no physical demonstration of affection or rejoicing between the women. They knew that the time would come when they would talk over the affair down to the bone together, but now they were content to recognize the fact, and let the time for talking arrive when it would. "I guess," said Mrs. Durgin, "you'd better go over to the help's house and see how that youngest Miller girl's gittin' along. She'd ought to give up and go home if she a'n't fit for her work."

"I'll go and see her," said Cynthia. "I don't believe she's strong enough for a waitress, and I have got to tell her so."

"Well," returned Mrs. Durgin, glumly, after a moment's reflection, "I shouldn't want you should hurry her. Wait till she's out of bed, and give her another chance."

"All right."

Jeff had been lurking about for the event of the interview, and he waylaid Cynthia on the path to the help's house.

"I'm going over to see that youngest Miller girl," she explained.

"Yes, I know all about that," said Jeff. "Well, mother took it just right, didn't she? You can't always count on her; but I hadn't much anxiety in this case. She likes you, Cynthia."

"I guess so," said the girl, demurely; and she looked away from him to smile her pleasure in the fact.

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"But I believe if she hadn't known you were with her about my last year in Harvard—it would have been different. I could see, when I brought it in that you wanted me to go back, her mind was made up for you."

"Why need you say anything about that?"

"Oh, I knew it would clinch her. I understand mother. If you want something from her you mustn't ask it straight out. You must propose something very disagreeable. Then when she refuses that, you can come in for what you were really after and get it."

"I don't know," said Cynthia, "as I should like to think that your mother had been tricked into feeling right about me."

"Tricked!" The color flashed up in Jeff's face.

"Not that, Jeff," said the girl, tenderly. "But you know what I mean. I hope you talked it all out fully with her."

"Fully? I *don't* know what you mean."

"About your not studying law, and—everything."

"I don't believe in crossing a river till I come to it," said Jeff. "I didn't say anything to her about that."

"You didn't!"

"No. What had it got to do with our being engaged?"

"What had your going back to Harvard to do with it? If your mother thinks I'm with her in that, she'll think I'm with her in the other. And I'm not. I'm with *you*." She let her hand find his, as they walked side by side, and gave it a little pressure.

"It's the greatest thing, Cynthia," he said, breathlessly, "to *have* you with me in that. But, if you said I ought to study law, I should do it."

"I shouldn't say that, for I believe you're right; but even if I believed you were wrong, I shouldn't say it. You have a right to make your life what you want it; and your mother

hasn't. Only she must know it, and you must tell her at once."

"At once?"

"Yes—now. What good will it do to put it off? You're not *afraid* to tell her!"

"I don't like you to use that word."

"And I don't like to use it. But I know how it is. You're afraid that the brunt of it will come on *me*. She'll think you're all right, but I'm all wrong because I agree with you."

"Something like that."

"Well, now, I'm not afraid of anything she can say; and what could she do? She can't part us, unless you let her, and then *I* should let her, too."

"But what's the hurry? What's the need of doing it right off?"

"Because it's a deceit not to do it. It's a lie!"

"I don't see it in that light. I might change my mind, and still go on and study law."

"You know you never will. Now, Jeff! Why do you act so?"

Jeff did not answer at once. He walked beside her with a face of trouble that became one of resolve in the set jaws. "I guess you're right, Cynthy. She's got to know the worst, and the sooner she knows it the better."

"Yes!"

He had another moment of faltering. "You don't want I should talk it over with Mr. Westover?"

"What has he got to do with it?"

"That's true!"

"If you want to see it in the right light, you can think you've let it run on till after you're out of college, and then you've got to tell her. Suppose she asked you how long you had made up your mind against the law, how should you feel?"

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And if she asked me whether I'd known it all along, and I had to say I had, and that I'd supported and encouraged you in it, how should *I* feel?"

"She mightn't ask any such question," said Jeff, gloomily. Cynthia gave a little impatient "Oh!" and he hastened to add: "But you're right; I've got to tell her. I'll tell her to-night—"

"Don't wait till to-night; do it now."

"Now?"

"Yes; and I'll go with you as soon as I've seen the youngest Miller girl." They had reached the help's house now, and Cynthia said: "You wait outside here, and I'll go right back with you. Oh, I hope it isn't doing wrong to put it off till I've seen that girl!" She disappeared through the door, and Jeff waited by the steps outside, plucking up one long grass stem after another and biting it in two. When Cynthia came out she said: "I guess she'll be all right. Now come, and don't lose another second."

"You're afraid I sha'n't do it if I wait any longer!"

"I'm afraid *I* sha'n't." There was a silence after this.

"Do you know what I think of you, Cynthia?" asked Jeff, hurrying to keep up with her quick steps.

"You've got more courage—"

"Oh, don't praise me, or I shall break down!"

"I'll see that you don't break down," said Jeff, tenderly. "It's the greatest thing to have you go with me!"

"Why, don't you *see*?" she lamented. "If you went alone, and told your mother that I approved of it, you would look as if you were afraid, and wanted to get behind me; and I'm not going to have that."

They found Mrs. Durgin in the dark entry of the old farm-house, and Cynthia said, with involuntary imperiousness: "Come in here, Mrs. Durgin; I want to tell you something."

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She led the way to the old parlor, and she checked Mrs. Durgin's question, "Has that Miller girl—"

"It isn't about her," said Cynthia, pushing the door to. "It's about me—and Jeff."

Mrs. Durgin became aware of Jeff's presence with an effect of surprise. "There a'n't anything *more*, is there?"

"Yes, there is!" Cynthia shrilled. "Now, Jeff!"

"It's just this, mother: Cynthia thinks I ought to tell you—and she thinks I ought to have told you last night—she expected me to—that I'm not going to study law."

"And I approve of his not doing it," Cynthia promptly followed, and she put herself beside Jeff where he stood in front of his mother's rocking-chair.

She looked from one to the other of the faces before her. "I'm sorry a son of mine," she said, with dignity, "had to be told how to act with his mother. But, if he had, I don't know as anybody had a better right to do it than the girl that's going to marry him. And I'll say this, Cynthia Whitwell, before I say anything else: you've begun *right*. I wish I could say Jeff had."

There was an uncomfortable moment before Cynthia said: "He *expected* to tell you."

"Oh yes, I know," said his mother, sadly. She added, sharply: "And did he expect to tell me what he intended to do for a livin'?"

Jeff took the word. "Yes, I did. I intend to keep a hotel."

"What hotel?" asked Mrs. Durgin, with a touch of taunting in her tone.

"This one."

The mother of the bold, rebellious boy that Jeff had been stirred in Mrs. Durgin's heart, and she looked at him with the eyes that used to condone his mischief. But she said: "I guess

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you'll find out that there's more than one has to agree to that."

"Yes, there are two: you and Jackson; and I don't know but what three, if you count Cynthia, here."

His mother turned to the girl. "You think this fellow's got sense enough to keep a hotel?"

"Yes, Mrs. Durgin, I do. I think he's got good ideas about a hotel."

"And what's he goin' to do with his college education?"

Jeff interposed. "You think that all the college graduates turn out lawyers and doctors and professors? Some of 'em are mighty glad to sweep out banks in hopes of a clerkship; and some take any sort of a place in a mill or a business house, to work up; and some bum around out West on cattle ranches; and some, if they're lucky, get newspaper reporters' places at ten dollars a week."

Cynthia followed with the generalization: "I don't believe anybody can know too much to keep a hotel. It won't hurt Jeff if he's been to Harvard, or to Europe, either."

"I guess there's a pair of you," said Mrs. Durgin, with superficial contempt. She was silent for a time, and they waited. "Well, there!" she broke out again. "I've got something to chew upon for a spell, I guess. Go along, now, both of you! And the next time you've got to face your mother, Jeff, don't you come in lookin' round anybody's petticoats! I'll see you later about all this."

They went away with the joyful shame of children who have escaped punishment.

"That's the last of it, Cynthia," said Jeff.

"I guess so," the girl assented, with a certain grief in her voice. "I wish you *had* told her first!"

"Oh, never mind that now!" cried Jeff, and in the dim passageway he took her in his arms and kissed her.

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He would have released her, but she lingered in his embrace. "Will you promise that if there's ever anything like it again, you *won't* wait for me to make you?"

"I like your having made me, but I promise," he said.

Then she tightened her arms around his neck and kissed him.

Thomas Hardy

I

A*FTER an absence of many years Clym Yeobright has returned from Paris to his native country, and lives with his mother in a lonely cottage on the edge of Egdon Heath—a desolate tract of land in the south of England. Of a serious if not melancholy temperament, he has wearied of his empty life as a tradesman, and has conceived an idealistic scheme of devoting his energies to the informal education of the common people. His mother, a woman of severe common sense and great strength of character, has been only partially reconciled to the proposed change in his mode of life. Her anxiety is now greatly increased by the fear that he is yielding to the fascinations of Eustacia Vye, a beautiful, unconventional girl who lives alone with her grandfather, a retired sea-captain, in a small hamlet called Mist-over. It is this new concern which prompts her to ask the abrupt question with which the scene begins.*

Mrs. Yeobright lives at a place named Blooms-End. Rainbarrow, a mound which rises picturesquely out of the heath, is a favorite haunt of the restless Eustacia. Christian, who appears but for a moment, belongs to the race of Wessex peasants whom Mr. Hardy has made famous.

¹ From *The Return of the Native*. Reprinted with the permission of Harper & Brothers.

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Mrs. Yeobright, as has already been said, is the first speaker in the dialogue.

"Where have you been, Clym?" she immediately said. "Why didn't you tell me that you were going away at this time?"

"I have been on the heath."

"You'll meet Eustacia Vye if you go up there."

Clym paused a minute. "Yes, I met her this evening," he said, as though it were spoken under the sheer necessity of preserving honesty.

"I wondered if you had."

"It was no appointment."

"No; such meetings never are."

"But you are not angry, mother?"

"I can hardly say that I am not. Angry? No. But when I consider the usual nature of the drag which causes men of promise to disappoint the world I feel uneasy."

"You deserve credit for the feeling, mother. But I can assure you that you need not be disturbed by it on my account."

"When I think of you and your new crotchets," said Mrs. Yeobright, with some emphasis, "I naturally don't feel so comfortable as I did a twelvemonth ago. It is incredible to me that a man accustomed to the attractive women of Paris and elsewhere should be so easily worked upon by a girl on a heath. You could just as well have walked another way."

"I had been studying all day."

"Well, yes," she added more hopefully, "I have been thinking that you might get on as a schoolmaster, and rise that way, since you really are determined to hate the course you were pursuing."

Yeobright was unwilling to disturb this idea, though his scheme was far enough removed from one wherein the education of youth should be made a mere channel of social ascent.

He had no desires of that sort. He had reached the stage in a young man's life when the grimness of the general human situation first becomes clear; and the realization of this causes ambition to halt awhile. In France it is not uncustomary to commit suicide at this stage; in England we do much better, or much worse, as the case may be.

The love between the young man and his mother was strangely invisible now. Of love it may be said, the less earthly the less demonstrative. In its absolutely indestructible form it reaches a profundity in which all exhibition of itself is painful. It was so with these. Had conversations between them been overheard, people would have said, "How cold they are to each other!"

His theory and his wishes about devoting his future to teaching had made an impression on Mrs. Yeobright. Indeed, how could it be otherwise when he was a part of her—when their discourses were as if carried on between the right and the left hands of the same body? He had despaired of reaching her by argument; and it was almost as a discovery to him that he could reach her by a magnetism which was as superior to words as words are to yells.

Strangely enough he began to feel now that it would not be so hard to persuade her who was his best friend that comparative poverty was essentially the higher course for him, as to reconcile to his feelings the act of persuading her. From every provident point of view his mother was so undoubtedly right, that he was not without a sickness of heart in finding he could shake her.

She had a singular insight into life, considering that she had never mixed with it. There are instances of persons who, without clear ideas of the things they criticize, have yet had clear ideas of the relations of those things. Blacklock, a poet blind from his birth, could describe visual objects with accuracy; Professor Saunderson, who was also blind, gave excel-

lent lectures on color, and taught others the theory of ideas which they had and he had not. In the social sphere these gifted ones are mostly women; they can watch a world which they never saw, and estimate forces of which they have only heard. We call it intuition.

What was the great world to Mrs. Yeobright? A multitude whose tendencies could be perceived, though not its essences. Communities were seen by her as from a distance; she saw them as we see the throngs which cover the canvasses of Sallaert, Van Alsloot, and others of that school—vast masses of beings, jostling, zig-zagging, and processioning in definite directions, but whose features are indistinguishable by the very comprehensiveness of the view.

One could see that, as far as it had gone, her life was very complete on its reflective side. The philosophy of her nature, and its limitation by circumstances, was almost written in her movements. They had a majestic foundation, though they were far from being majestic; and they had a groundwork of assurance, but they were not assured. As her once elastic walk had become deadened by time, so had her natural pride of life been hindered in its blooming by her necessities.

The next slight touch in the shaping of Clym's destiny occurred a few days after. A barrow was opened on the heath, and Yeobright attended the operation, remaining away from his study during several hours. In the afternoon Christian returned from a journey in the same direction, and Mrs. Yeobright questioned him.

"They have dug a hole, and they have found things like flower-pots upside down, Mis'ess Yeobright; and inside these be real charnel bones. They have carried 'em off to men's houses; but I shouldn't like to sleep where they will bide. Dead folks have been known to come and claim their own. Mr. Yeobright had got one pot of the bones, and was going to bring 'em home—real skellington bones—but 'twas ordered

otherwise. You'll be relieved to hear that he gave away his, pot and all, on second thoughts; and a blessed thing for ye, Mis'ess Yeobright, considering the wind o' nights."

"Gave it away?"

"Yes. To Miss Vye. She has a cannibal taste for such churchyard furniture seemingly."

"Miss Vye was there too?"

"Ay, a b'lieve she was."

When Clym came home, which was shortly after, his mother said, in a curious tone, "The urn you had meant for me you gave away."

Yeobright made no reply; the current of her feeling was too pronounced to admit it.

The early weeks of the year passed on. Yeobright certainly studied at home, but he also walked much abroad, and the direction of his walk was always towards some point of a line between Mistover and Rainbarrow.

The month of March arrived, and the heath showed its first faint signs of awakening from winter trance. The awakening was almost feline in its stealthiness. The pool outside the bank by Eustacia's dwelling, which seemed as dead and desolate as ever to an observer who moved and made noises in his observation, would gradually disclose a state of great animation when silently watched awhile. A timid animal world had come to life for the season. Little tadpoles and efts began to bubble up through the water, and to race along beneath it; toads made noises like very young ducks, and advanced to the margin in twos and threes; overhead, bumblebees flew hither and thither in the thickening light, their drone coming and going like the sound of a gong.

On an evening such as this Yeobright descended into the Blooms-End valley from beside that very pool, where he had been standing with another person quite silently and quite long enough to hear all this puny stir of resurrection in na-

ture; yet he had not heard it. His walk was rapid as he came down, and he went with a springy tread. Before entering upon his mother's premises he stopped and breathed. The light which shone forth on him from the window revealed that his face was flushed and his eye bright. What it did not show was something which lingered upon his lips like a seal set there. The abiding presence of this impress was so real that he hardly dared to enter the house, for it seemed as if his mother might say, "What red spot is that glowing upon your mouth so vividly?"

But he entered soon after. The tea was ready, and he sat down opposite his mother. She did not speak many words and as for him, something had been just done and some words had been just said on the hill which prevented him from beginning a desultory chat. His mother's taciturnity was not without ominousness, but he appeared not to care. He knew why she said so little, but he could not remove the cause of her bearing towards him. These half-silent sittings were far from uncommon with them now. At last Yeobright made a beginning of what was intended to strike at the whole root of the matter.

"Five days have we sat like this at meals with scarcely a word. What's the use of it, mother?"

"None," said she, in a heart-swollen tone. "But there is only too good a reason."

"Not when you know all. I have been wanting to speak about this, and I am glad the subject is begun. The reason, of course, is Eustacia Vye. Well, I confess I have seen her lately, and have seen her a good many times."

"Yes, yes; and I know what that amounts to. It troubles me, Clym. You are wasting your life here; and it is solely on account of her. If it had not been for that woman you would never have entertained this teaching scheme at all."

Clym looked hard at his mother. "You know that is not it," he said.

"Well, I know you had decided to attempt it before you saw her; but that would have ended in intentions. It was very well to talk of, but ridiculous to put in practice. I fully expected that in the course of a month or two you would have seen the folly of such self-sacrifice, and would have been by this time back again to Paris in some business or other. I can understand objections to the diamond trade—I really was thinking that it might be inadequate to the life of a man like you even though it might have made you a millionaire. But now I see how mistaken you are about this girl, I doubt if you could be correct about other things."

"How am I mistaken in her?"

"She is lazy and dissatisfied. But that is not all of it. Supposing her to be as good a woman as any you can find, which she certainly is not, why do you wish to connect yourself with anybody at present?"

"Well, there are practical reasons," Clym began, and then almost broke off under an overpowering sense of the weight of argument which could be brought against his statement. "If I take a school an educated woman would be invaluable as a help to me."

"What! you really mean to marry her?"

"It would be premature to state that plainly. But consider what obvious advantages there would be in doing it. She—"

"Don't suppose she has any money. She hasn't a farthing."

"She is excellently educated, and would make a good matron in a boarding-school. I candidly own that I have modified my views a little, in deference to you; and it should satisfy you. I no longer adhere to my intention of giving with my own mouth rudimentary education to the lowest class. I can do better. I can establish a good private school

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for farmers' sons, and without stopping the school I can manage to pass examinations. By this means, and by the assistance of a wife like her——"

"O, Clym!"

"I shall ultimately, I hope, be at the head of one of the best schools in the county."

Yeobright had enunciated the word "her" with a fervor which, in conversation with a mother, was absurdly indiscreet. Hardly a maternal heart within the four seas could, in such circumstances, have helped being irritated at that ill-timed betrayal of feeling for a new woman.

"You are blinded, Clym," she said warmly. "It was a bad day for you when you first set eyes on her. And your scheme is merely a castle in the air built on purpose to justify this folly which has seized you, and to salve your conscience on the irrational situation you are in."

"Mother, that's not true," he firmly answered.

"Can you maintain that I sit and tell untruths, when all I wish to do is to save you from sorrow? For shame, Clym! But it is all through that woman—a hussy!"

Clym reddened like fire and rose. He placed his hand upon his mother's shoulder and said, in a tone which hung strangely between entreaty and command: "I won't hear it. I may be led to answer you in a way which we shall both regret."

His mother parted her lips to begin some other vehement truth, but on looking at him she saw that in his face which led her to leave the words unsaid. Yeobright walked once or twice across the room, and then suddenly went out of the house. It was eleven o'clock when he came in, though he had not been further than the precincts of the garden. His mother was gone to bed. A light was left burning on the table, and supper was spread. Without partaking of any food he secured the doors and went upstairs.

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II

Thomasin is a niece of Mrs. Yeobright who has recently been married to Wildeve, the proprietor of an inn known as the "Woman." Before Thomasin's marriage, and before the advent of Clym, a stormy affair of the heart had been enacted between the sentimental Wildeve and the discontented Eustacia.

When Yeobright was not with Eustacia he was sitting slavishly over his books; when he was not reading he was meeting her. These meetings were carried on with the greatest secrecy.

One afternoon his mother came home from a morning visit to Thomasin. He could see from a disturbance in the lines of her face that something had happened.

"I have been told an incomprehensible thing," she said mournfully. "The captain has let out at the Woman that you and Eustacia Vye are engaged to be married."

"We are," said Yeobright. "But it may not be yet for a very long time."

"I should hardly think it *would* be yet for a very long time! You will take her to Paris, I suppose?" She spoke with weary hopelessness.

"I am not going back to Paris."

"What will you do with a wife, then?"

"Keep a school in Budmouth, as I have told you."

"That's incredible! The place is overrun with schoolmasters. You have no special qualifications. What possible chance is there for such as you?"

"There is no chance of getting rich. But with my system of education, which is as new as it is true, I shall do a great deal of good to my fellow-creatures."

"Dreams, dreams! If there had been any system left to

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be invented they would have found it out at the universities long before this time."

"Never, mother. They cannot find it out, because their teachers don't come in contact with the class which demands such a system—that is, those who have had no preliminary training. My plan is one for instilling high knowledge into empty minds without first cramming them with what has to be uncrammed again before true study begins."

"I might have believed you if you had kept yourself free from entanglements; but this woman—if she had been a good girl it would have been bad enough; but being—"

"She is a good girl."

"So you think. A foreign bandmaster's daughter! What has her life been? Her surname even is not her true one."

"She is Captain Vye's granddaughter, and her father merely took her mother's name. And she is a lady by instinct."

"They call him 'captain,' but anybody is captain."

"He was in the royal navy!"

"No doubt he has been to sea in some tub or other. Why doesn't he look after her? No lady would rove about the heath at all hours of the day and night as she does. But that's not all of it. There was something queer between her and Thomasin's husband at one time—I am as sure of it as that I stand here."

"Eustacia has told me. He did pay her a little attention a year ago; but there's no harm in that. I like her all the better."

"Clym," said his mother with firmness, "I have no proof against her, unfortunately. But if she makes you a good wife, there has never been a bad one."

"Believe me, you are almost exasperating," said Yeobright vehemently. "And this very day I had intended to arrange a meeting between you. But you give me no peace; you try to thwart my wishes in everything."

"I hate the thought of any son of mine marrying badly! I wish I had never lived to see this; it is too much for me—it is more than I thought!" She turned to the window. Her breath was coming quickly, and her lips were pale, parted, and trembling.

"Mother," said Clym, "whatever you do, you will always be dear to me—that you know. But one thing I have a right to say, which is, that at my age I am old enough to know what is best for me."

Mrs. Yeobright remained for some time silent and shaken, as if she could say no more. Then she replied, "Best? Is it best for you to injure your prospects for such a voluptuous, idle woman as that? Don't you see that by the very fact of your choosing her you prove that you do not know what is best for you? You give up your whole thought—you set your whole soul—to please a woman."

"I do. And that woman is you."

"How can you treat me so flippantly!" said his mother, turning again to him with a tearful look. "You are unnatural, Clym, and I did not expect it."

"Very likely," said he cheerlessly. "You did not know the measure you were going to mete me, and therefore did not know the measure that would be returned to you again."

"You answer me; you think only of her. You stick to her in all things."

"That proves her to be worthy. I have never yet supported what is bad. And I do not care only for her. I care for you and for myself, and for anything that is good. When a woman once dislikes another she is merciless!"

"O Clym! please don't go setting down as my fault what is your obstinate wrong-headedness. If you wished to connect yourself with an unworthy person why did you come home here to do it? Why didn't you do it in Paris?—it is more the fashion there. You have come only to distress me, a lonely

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woman, and shorten my days! I wish that you would bestow your presence where you bestow your love!"

Clym said huskily: "You are my mother. I will say no more—beyond this, that I beg your pardon for having thought this my home. I will no longer inflict myself upon you; I'll go." And he went out with tears in his eyes.

III

Clym has completed the preparations for his departure to a cottage which he has engaged for Eustacia and himself on another side of the heath. The present interview is the last which ever takes place between Clym and his mother. Although Mrs. Yeobright later seeks a reconciliation, her purpose is defeated by a series of perverse events.

It now only remained to wish his mother good-by. She was sitting by the window as usual when he came downstairs.

"Mother, I am going to leave you," he said, holding out his hand.

"I thought you were, by your packing," replied Mrs. Yeobright in a voice from which every particle of emotion was painfully excluded.

"And you will part friends with me?"

"Certainly, Clym."

"I am going to be married on the twenty-fifth."

"I thought you were going to be married."

"And then—and then you must come and see us. You will understand me better after that, and our situation will not be so wretched as it is now."

"I do not think it likely I shall come to see you."

"Then it will not be my fault, or Eustacia's, mother. Good-by!"

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He kissed her check, and departed in great misery, which was several hours in lessening itself to a controllable level. The position had been such that nothing more could be said without, in the first place, breaking down a barrier; and that was not to be done.

George Eliot

THE principal persons are Tertius Lydgate, a young physician, and Rosamond—formerly Rosamond Vincy—his wife. Lydgate, a man of excellent character, able and ambitious, has long dreamed of distinguishing himself by discoveries in his chosen science; but of late his affairs have assumed a most discouraging aspect. He has carelessly allowed himself to fall seriously into debt—a tradesman named Dover being at the moment one of his two most insistent creditors. Rosamond has been ill, and in consequence he has hitherto said nothing to her of this embarrassment; to-night, however, he comes home resolved to make her a partner in his anxiety and to explain some disagreeable arrangements which he has found it necessary to make. Since their marriage Lydgate has become vividly conscious of disquieting traits in the character of his wife; and Rosamond, on her part, has but imperfectly realized the happiness she had anticipated; but no definite or settled estrangement has taken place in their relations.

Ladislaw is a young friend of Lydgate and his wife, and a frequent caller at their house. He is also a friend of Dorothea, of whom it is necessary to know no more than is implied in the deep respect which her devotion to her sick husband has inspired in Lydgate. The Laure incidentally alluded to is a

¹ From *Middlemarch*. One sentence near the beginning, irrelevant to the passage, is here omitted,

Provençal actress who was supposed to have killed her husband by accident, but in reality had done so, according to her own statement to Lydgate, because he "wearied" her.

Lydgate, musing gloomily over the course of his recent life, is first described.

It was evening when he got home. He was intensely miserable, this strong man of nine-and-twenty and of many gifts. He was not saying angrily within himself that he had made a profound mistake; but the mistake was at work in him like a recognized chronic disease, mingling its uneasy importunities with every prospect, and enfeebling every thought. As he went along the passage to the drawing-room, he heard the piano and singing.

Of course, Ladislaw was there. Lydgate had no objection in general to Ladislaw's coming, but just now he was annoyed that he could not find his hearth free. When he opened the door the two singers went on towards the key-note, raising their eyes and looking at him, indeed, but not regarding his entrance as an interruption. To a man galled with his harness as poor Lydgate was, it is not soothing to see two people warbling at him, as he comes in with the sense that the painful day has still pains in store. His face, already paler than usual, took on a scowl as he walked across the room and flung himself into a chair.

The singers feeling themselves excused by the fact that they had only three bars to sing, now turned round.

"How are you, Lydgate?" said Will, coming forward to shake hands.

Lydgate took his hand, but did not think it necessary to speak.

"Have you dined, Tertius? I expected you much earlier," said Rosamond, who had already seen that her husband was

in a "horrible humor." She seated herself in her usual place as she spoke.

"I have dined. I should like some tea, please," said Lydgate, curtly, still scowling and looking markedly at his legs stretched out before him.

Will was too quick to need more. "I shall be off," he said, reaching his hat.

"Tea is coming," said Rosamond; "pray don't go."

"Yes, Lydgate is bored," said Will, who had more comprehension of Lydgate than Rosamond had, and was not offended by his manner, easily imagining outdoor causes of annoyance.

"There is the more need for you to stay," said Rosamond, playfully, and in her lightest accent; "he will not speak to me all the evening."

"Yes, Rosamond, I shall," said Lydgate, in his strong baritone. "I have some serious business to speak to you about."

No introduction of the business could have been less like that which Lydgate had intended; but her indifferent manner had been too provoking.

"There! you see," said Will. "I'm going to the meeting about the Mechanics Institute. Good-by"; and he went quickly out of the room.

Rosamond did not look at her husband, but presently rose and took her place before the tea-tray. She was thinking that she had never seen him so disagreeable. Lydgate turned his dark eyes on her and watched her as she delicately handled the tea-service with her taper fingers, and looked at the objects immediately before her with no curve in her face disturbed and yet with an ineffable protest in her air against all people with unpleasant manners. For the moment he lost the sense of his wound in a sudden speculation about this new form of feminine impassibility revealing itself in the sylphlike frame which he had once interpreted as the sign of a ready intelligent sensitiveness. His mind glancing back to Laure while

he looked at Rosamond, he said inwardly, "Would *she* kill me because I wearied her?" and then, "It is the way with all women." But this power of generalizing which gives men so much the superiority in mistake over the dumb animals, was immediately thwarted by Lydgate's memory of wondering impressions from the behavior of another woman—from Dorothea's looks and tones of emotion about her husband when Lydgate began to attend him—from her passionate cry to be taught what would best comfort that man for whose sake it seemed as if she must quell every impulse in her except the yearnings of faithfulness and compassion. These revived impressions succeeded each other quickly and dreamily in Lydgate's mind while the tea was being brewed. He had shut his eyes in the last instant of reverie while he heard Dorothea saying, "Advise me—think what I can do—he has been all his life laboring and looking forward. He minds about nothing else—and I mind about nothing else."

That voice of deep-souled womanhood had remained within him as the enkindling conceptions of dead and sceptered genius had remained within him (is there not a genius for feeling nobly which also reigns over human spirits and their conclusions?); the tones were a music from which he was falling away—he had really fallen into a momentary doze, when Rosamond said in her silvery neutral way, "Here is your tea, Tertius," setting it on the small table by his side, and then moved back to her place without looking at him. Lydgate was too hasty in attributing insensibility to her; after her own fashion, she was sensitive enough, and took lasting impressions. Her impression now was one of offense and repulsion. But then, Rosamond had no scowls and had never raised her voice: she was quite sure that no one could justly find fault with her.

Perhaps Lydgate and she had never felt so far off each other before; but there were strong reasons for not deferring his

revelation, even if he had not already begun it by that abrupt announcement; indeed, some of the angry desire to rouse her into more sensibility on his account which had prompted him to speak prematurely, still mingled with his pain in the prospect of her pain. But he waited till the tray was gone, the candles were lit, and the evening quiet might be counted on: the interval had left time for repelled tenderness to return into the old course. He spoke kindly.

"Dear Rosy, lay down your work and come to sit by me," he said, gently, pushing away the table, and stretching out his arm to draw a chair near his own.

Rosamond obeyed. As she came towards him in her drapery of transparent faintly-tinted muslin, her slim yet round figure never looked more graceful; as she sat down by him and laid one hand on the elbow of his chair, at last looking at him and meeting his eyes, her delicate neck and cheek and purely-cut lips never had more of that untarnished beauty which touches us in springtime and infancy and all sweet freshness. It touched Lydgate now, and mingled the early moments of his love for her with all the other memories which were stirred in this crisis of deep trouble. He laid his ample hand softly on hers, saying,—

"Dear!" with the lingering utterance which affection gives to the word. Rosamond too was still under the power of that same past, and her husband was still in part the Lydgate whose approval had stirred delight. She put his hair lightly away from his forehead, then laid her other hand on his and was conscious of forgiving him.

"I am obliged to tell you what will hurt you, Rosy. But there are things which husband and wife must think of together. I dare say it has occurred to you already that I am short of money."

Lydgate paused; but Rosamond turned her neck and looked at a vase on the mantelpiece.

"I was not able to pay for all the things we had to get before we were married, and there have been expenses since which I have been obliged to meet. The consequence is, there is a large debt at Brassing—three hundred and eighty pounds—which has been pressing on me a good while, and in fact we are getting deeper every day, for people don't pay me the faster because others want the money. I took pains to keep it from you while you were not well; but now we must think together about it, and you must help me."

"What can *I* do, Tertius?" said Rosamond, turning her eyes on him again. That little speech of four words, like so many others in all languages, is capable by varied vocal inflections of expressing all states of mind from helpless dimness to exhaustive argumentative perception, from the completest self-devoting fellowship to the most neutral aloofness. Rosamond's thin utterance threw into the words, "What can *I* do!" as much neutrality as they could hold. They fell like a mortal chill on Lydgate's roused tenderness. He did not storm in indignation—he felt too sad a sinking of the heart. And when he spoke again it was more in the tone of a man who forces himself to fulfill a task.

"It is necessary for you to know, because I have to give security for a time, and a man must come to make an inventory of the furniture."

Rosamond colored deeply. "Have you not asked papa for money?" she said, as soon as she could speak.

"No."

"Then I must ask him!" she said, releasing her hands from Lydgate's, and rising to stand at two yards' distance from him.

"No, Rosy," said Lydgate, decisively. "It is too late to do that. The inventory will be begun to-morrow. Remember it is a mere security: it will make no difference: it is a temporary affair. I insist upon it that your father shall not

know, unless I choose to tell him," added Lydgate, with a more peremptory emphasis.

This certainly was unkind, but Rosamond had thrown him back on evil expectation as to what she would do in the way of quiet, steady disobedience. The unkindness seemed unpardonable to her: she was not given to weeping and disliked it, but now her chin and lips began to tremble and the tears welled up. Perhaps it was not possible for Lydgate, under the double stress of outward material difficulty and of his own proud resistance to humiliating consequences, to imagine fully what this sudden trial was to a young creature who had known nothing but indulgence, and whose dreams had all been of new indulgence, more exactly to her taste. But he did wish to spare her as much as he could, and her tears cut him to the heart. He could not speak again immediately; but Rosamond did not go on sobbing: she tried to conquer her agitation and wiped away her tears, continuing to look before her at the mantelpiece.

"Try not to grieve, darling," said Lydgate, turning his eyes up towards her. That she had chosen to move away from him in this moment of her trouble made everything harder to say, but he must absolutely go on. "We must brace ourselves to do what is necessary. It is I who have been in fault: I ought to have seen that I could not afford to live in this way. But many things have told against me in my practice, and it really just now has ebbed to a low point. I may recover it, but in the meantime we must pull up—we must change our way of living. We shall weather it. When I have given this security I shall have time to look about me; and you are so clever that if you turn your mind to managing you will school me into carefulness. I have been a thoughtless rascal about squaring prices—but come, dear, sit down and forgive me."

Lydgate was bowing his neck under the yoke like a creature

who had talons, but who had Reason too, which often reduces us to meekness. When he had spoken the last words in an imploring tone, Rosamond returned to the chair by his side. His self-blame gave her some hope that he would attend to her opinion, and she said,—

“Why can you not put off having the inventory made? You can send the men away to-morrow when they come.”

“I shall not send them away,” said Lydgate, the peremptoriness rising again. Was it of any use to explain?

“If we left Middlemarch, there would of course be a sale, and that would do as well.”

“But we are not going to leave Middlemarch.”

“I am sure, Tertius, it would be much better to do so. Why can we not go to London? Or near Durham, where your family is known?”

“We can go nowhere without money, Rosamond.”

“Your friends would not wish you to be without money. And surely these odious tradesmen might be made to understand that, and to wait, if you would make proper representations to them.”

“This is idle, Rosamond,” said Lydgate, angrily. “You must learn to take my judgment on questions you don’t understand. I have made necessary arrangements, and they must be carried out. As to friends, I have no expectations whatever from them, and shall not ask them for anything.”

Rosamond sat perfectly still. The thought in her mind was that if she had known how Lydgate would behave, she would never have married him.

“We have no time to waste now on unnecessary words, dear,” said Lydgate, trying to be gentle again. “There are some details that I want to consider with you. Dover says we will take a good deal of the plate back again, and any of the jewelry we like. He really behaves very well.”

“Are we to go without spoons and forks then?” said Rosa-

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mond, whose very lips seemed to get thinner with the thinness of her utterance. She was determined to make no further resistance or suggestions.

"Oh no, dear!" said Lydgate. "But look here," he continued, drawing a paper from his pocket and opening it, "here is Dover's account. See, I have marked a number of articles, which if we returned them would reduce the amount by thirty pounds and more. I have not marked any of the jewelry." Lydgate had really felt this point of the jewelry very bitter to himself; but he had overcome the feeling by severe argument. He could not propose to Rosamond that she should return any particular present of his, but he had told himself that he was bound to put Dover's offer before her, and her inward prompting might make the affair easy.

"It is useless for me to look, Tertius," said Rosamond, calmly; "you will return what you please." She would not turn her eyes on the paper, and Lydgate, flushing up to the roots of his hair, drew it back and let it fall on his knee. Meanwhile Rosamond quietly went out of the room, leaving Lydgate helpless and wondering. Was she not coming back? It seemed that she had no more identified herself with him than if they had been creatures of different species and opposing interests. He tossed his head and thrust his hands deep into his pockets with a sort of vengeance. There was still science—there were still good objects to work for. He must give a tug still—all the stronger because other satisfactions were going.

But the door opened and Rosamond re-entered. She carried the leather box containing the amethysts, and a tiny ornamental basket which contained other boxes, and laying them on the chair where she had been sitting, she said, with perfect propriety in her air,—

"This is all the jewelry you ever gave me. You can return what you like of it, and of the plate also. You will

not, of course, expect me to stay at home to-morrow. I shall go to papa's."

To many women the look Lydgate cast at her would have been more terrible than one of anger: it had in it a despairing acceptance of the distance she was placing between them.

"And when shall you come back again?" he said, with a bitter edge on his accent.

"Oh, in the evening. Of course I shall not mention the subject to mamma." Rosamond was convinced that no woman could behave more irreproachably than she was behaving; and she went to sit down at her work-table. Lydgate sat meditating a minute or two, and the result was that he said, with some of the old emotion in his tone,—

"Now we have been united, Rosy, you should not leave me to myself in the first trouble that has come."

"Certainly not," said Rosamond; "I shall do everything it becomes me to do."

"It is not right that the thing should be left to servants, or that I should have to speak to them about it. And I shall be obliged to go out—I don't know how early. I understand your shrinking from the humiliation of these money affairs. But, my dear Rosamond, as a question of pride, which I feel just as much as you can, it is surely better to manage the thing ourselves, and let the servants see as little of it as possible; and since you are my wife, there is no hindering your share in my disgraces—if there were disgraces."

Rosamond did not answer immediately, but at last she said, "Very well, I will stay at home."

"I shall not touch these jewels, Rosy. Take them away again. But I will write out a list of plate that we may return, and that can be packed up and sent at once."

"The servants will know *that*," said Rosamond, with the lightest touch of sarcasm.

"Well, we must meet some disagreeables as necessities.

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Where is the ink, I wonder?" said Lydgate, rising, and throwing the account on the larger table where he meant to write.

Rosamond went to reach the inkstand, and after setting it on the table was going to turn away, when Lydgate, who was standing close by, put his arm round her and drew her towards him, saying,—

"Come, darling, let us make the best of things. It will only be for a time, I hope, that we shall have to be stingy and particular. Kiss me."

His native warm-heartedness took a great deal of quenching, and it is a part of manliness for a husband to feel keenly the fact that an inexperienced girl has got into trouble by marrying him. She received his kiss and returned it faintly, and in this way an appearance of accord was recovered for the time.

William Makepeace Thackeray

THERE was once a time when the sun used to shine brighter than it appears to do in this latter half of the nineteenth century; when the zest of life was certainly keener; when tavern wines seemed to be delicious, and tavern dinners the perfection of cookery; when the perusal of novels was productive of immense delight, and the monthly advent of magazine-day was hailed as an exciting holiday; when to know Thomson, who had written a magazine article, was an honor and a privilege; and to see Brown, the author of the last romance, in the flesh and actually walking in the Park with his umbrella and Mrs. Brown, was an event remarkable, and to the end of life to be perfectly well remembered; when the women of this world were a thousand times more beautiful than those of the present time; and the houris of the theaters especially so ravishing and angelic, that to see them was to set the heart in motion, and to see them again was to struggle for half an hour previously at the door of the pit; when tailors called at a man's lodgings to dazzle him with cards of fancy waistcoats: when it seemed necessary to purchase a grand silver dressing-case, so as to be ready for the beard which was not yet born (as yearling brides provide lace caps, and work rich clothes for the expected darling); when to ride in the Park on a ten-shilling hack seemed to be the height of fashionable enjoyment, and to splash your college tutor as you were driving down Regent Street in a hired cab the triumph of satire; when the acme of pleasure seemed to be to meet Jones of

¹ From Chapter I of *The Newcomes*. The omitted part of the chapter precedes the part here reprinted, and being of the nature of a prologue to the novel as a whole, contributes nothing to the narrative.

Trinity at the Bedford, and to make an arrangement with him, and with King of Corpus (who was staying at the Colonnade), and Martin of Trinity Hall (who was with his family in Bloomsbury Square), to dine at the Piazza, go to the play and see Braham in "Fra Diavolo," and end the frolic evening by partaking of supper and a song at the "Cave of Harmony."—It was in the days of my own youth, then, that I met one or two of the characters who are to figure in this history, and whom I must ask leave to accompany for a short while, and until, familiarized with the public, they can make their own way. As I recall them the roses bloom again, and the nightingales sing by the calm Bendemeer.

Going to the play then, and to the pit, as was the fashion in those merry days, with some young fellows of my own age, having listened delighted to the most cheerful and brilliant of operas, and laughed enthusiastically at the farce, we became naturally hungry at twelve o'clock at night, and a desire for Welsh rabbits and good old glee-singing led us to the "Cave of Harmony," then kept by the celebrated Hoskins, among whose friends we were proud to count.

We enjoyed such intimacy with Mr. Hoskins that he never failed to greet us with a kind nod; and John the waiter made room for us near the president of the convivial meeting. We knew the three admirable glee-singers, and many a time they partook of brandy-and-water at our expense. One of us gave his call dinner at Hoskins's, and a merry time we had of it. Where are you, O Hoskins, bird of the night? Do you warble your songs by Acheron, or troll your choruses by the banks of the black Avernus?

The goes of stout,¹ "The Chough and Crow," the Welsh rabbit, "The Red-Cross Knight," the hot brandy-and-water (the brown, the strong!), "The Bloom is on the Rye" (the bloom isn't on the rye any more!)—the song and the

¹ The glasses of strong ale or beer.

cup, in a word, passed round merrily; and I dare say the songs and bumpers were encored. It happened that there was a very small attendance at the "Cave" that night, and we were all more sociable and friendly because the company was select. The songs were chiefly of the sentimental class; such ditties were much in vogue at the time of which I speak.

There came into the "Cave" a gentleman with a lean brown face and long black mustachios, dressed in very loose clothes, and evidently a stranger to the place. At least he had not visited it for a long time. He was pointing out changes to a lad who was in his company; and, calling for sherry-and-water, he listened to the music, and twirled his mustachios with great enthusiasm.

At the very first glimpse of me the boy jumped up from the table, bounded across the room, ran to me with his hands out, and, blushing, said, "Don't you know me?"

It was little Newcome, my school-fellow, whom I had not seen for six years, grown a fine tall young stripling now, with the same bright blue eyes which I remembered when he was quite a little boy.

"What the deuce brings you here?" said I.

He laughed and looked roguish. "My father—that's my father—would come. He's just come back from India. He says all the wits used to come here,—Mr. Sheridan, Captain Morris, Colonel Hanger, Professor Porson. I told him your name, and that you used to be very kind to me when I first went to Smithfield. I've left now: I'm to have a private tutor. I say, I've got such a jolly pony. It's better fun than old Smiffle."

Here the whiskered gentleman, Newcome's father, pointing to a waiter to follow him with his glass of sherry-and-water, strode across the room twirling his mustachios, and came up to the table where we sat, making a salutation with his hat in a very stately and polite manner, so that Hoskins himself was,

as it were, obliged to bow; the glee-singers murmured among themselves (their eyes rolling over their glasses towards one another as they sucked brandy-and-water), and that mischievous little wag, little Nadab the Improvisatore (who had just come in), began to mimic him, feeling his imaginary whiskers, after the manner of the stranger, flapping about his pocket-handkerchief in the most ludicrous manner. Hoskins checked this ribaldry by sternly looking towards Nadab, and at the same time calling upon the gents to give their orders, the waiter being in the room, and Mr. Bellew about to sing a song.

Newcome's father came up and held out his hand to me. I dare say I blushed, for I had been comparing him to the admirable Harley in the "Critic,"¹ and had christened him Don Ferolo Whiskerandos.

He spoke in a voice exceedingly soft and pleasant, and with a cordiality so simple and sincere, that my laughter shrank away ashamed, and gave place to a feeling much more respectful and friendly. In youth, you see, one is touched by kindness. A man of the world may, of course, be grateful or not as he chooses.

"I have heard of your kindness, sir," says he, "to my boy. And whoever is kind to him is kind to me. Will you allow me to sit down by you? and may I beg you to try my cheroots?" We were friends in a minute—young Newcome snuggling by my side, his father opposite, to whom, after a minute or two of conversation, I presented my three college friends.

"You have come here, gentlemen, to see the wits," says the Colonel. "Are there any celebrated persons in the room? I have been five-and-thirty years from home, and want to see all that is to be seen."

King of Corpus (who was an incorrigible wag) was on the point of pulling some dreadful long bow, and pointing out a

¹ A comedy by Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

half-dozen of people in the room, as Rogers, and Hook, and Luttrell, etc., the most celebrated wits of that day; but I cut King's shins under the table, and got the fellow to hold his tongue.

"*Maxima debetur pueris*,"¹ says Jones (a fellow of very kind feeling, who has gone into the Church since), and, writing on his card to Hoskins, hinted to him that a boy was in the room, and a gentleman who was quite a greenhorn; hence that the songs had better be carefully selected.

And so they were. A lady's school might have come in, and, but for the smell of the cigars and brandy-and-water, have taken no harm by what happened. Why should it not always be so? If there are any "Caves of Harmony" now, I warrant messicurs the landlords, their interests would be better consulted by keeping their singers within bounds. The very greatest scamps like pretty songs, and are melted by them; so are honest people. It was worth a guinea to see the simple Colonel, and his delight at the music. He forgot all about the distinguished wits whom he had expected to see in his ravishment over the glees.

"I say, Clive, this is delightful. This is better than your aunt's concert with all the Squallinis,² hey? I shall come here often. Landlord, may I venture to ask those gentlemen if they will take any refreshment? What are their names?" (to one of his neighbors). "I was scarcely allowed to hear any singing before I went out,³ except an oratorio, where I fell asleep; but this, by George, is as fine as Incledon!" He became quite excited over his sherry-and-water—"I'm sorry to see you, gentlemen, drinking brandy-pawnee," says he; "it plays the deuce with our young men in India"). He joined in all the choruses with an exceedingly sweet voice. He

¹ To the young we should give only the greatest things.

² Doubtless the Colonel's name for the foreign singers affected by Clive's aunt.

³ To India.—Incledon, below, was an English tenor singer.

laughed at "The Derby Ram" so that it did you good to hear him: and when Hoskins sang (as he did admirably) "The Old English Gentleman," and described, in measured cadence, the death of that venerable aristocrat, tears trickled down the honest warrior's cheek, while he held out his hand to Hoskins and said, "Thank you, sir, for that song; it is an honor to human nature." On which Hoskins began to cry too.

And now young Nadab, having been cautioned, commenced one of those surprising feats of improvisation with which he used to charm audiences. He took us all off, and had rhymes pat about all the principal persons in the room: King's pins (which he wore very splendid), Martin's red waistcoat, etc. The Colonel was charmed with each feat, and joined delighted with the chorus—"Ritolderol-ritolderol ritolderolderay" (*bis*¹). And, when coming to the Colonel himself, he burst out—

"A military gent I see—And while his face I scan,
I think you'll all agree with me—He came from
Hindostan.

And by his side sits laughing free—A youth with
curly head,

I think you'll all agree with me—That he was best
in bed.

Ritolderol," etc.

The Colonel laughed immensely at this sally, and clapped his son, young Clive, on the shoulder: "Hear what he says of you, sir? Clive, best be off to bed, my boy—ho, ho! No, no. We know a trick worth two of that. 'We won't go home till morning, till daylight does appear.' Why should we? Why shouldn't my boy have innocent pleasure? I was allowed none when I was a young chap, and the severity was

¹ Repeated.

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nearly the ruin of me. I must go and speak with that young man—the most astonishing thing I ever heard in my life. What's his name? Mr. Nadab? Mr. Nadab, sir, you have delighted me. May I make so free as to ask you to come and dine with me to-morrow at six? Colonel Newcome, if you please, Nerot's Hotel, Clifford Street. I am always proud to make the acquaintance of men of genius, and you are one, or my name is not Newcome!”

“Sir, you do me h-honor,” says Mr. Nadab, pulling up his shirt-collar, “and per'aps the day will come when the world will do me justice. May I put down your h-honored name for my book of poems?”

“Of course, my dear sir,” says the enthusiastic Colonel, “I'll send them all over India. Put me down for six copies, and do me the favor to bring them to-morrow when you come to dinner.”

And now Mr. Hoskins asking if any gentleman would volunteer a song, what was our amazement when the simple Colonel offered to sing himself, at which the room applauded vociferously; whilst methought poor Clive Newcome hung down his head, and blushed as red as a peony. I felt for the young lad, and thought what my own sensations would have been if, in that place, my own uncle, Major Pendennis, had suddenly proposed to exert his lyrical powers.

The Colonel selected the ditty of “Wapping Old Stairs” (a ballad so sweet and touching that surely any English poet might be proud to be the father of it), and he sang this quaint and charming old song in an exceedingly pleasant voice, with flourishes and roulades in the old Incledon manner, which has pretty nearly passed away. The singer gave his heart and soul to the simple ballad, and delivered Molly's gentle appeal so pathetically that even the professional gentlemen hummed and buzzed a sincere applause; and some wags, who were inclined to jeer at the beginning of the performance, clinked

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their glasses and rapped their sticks with quite a respectful enthusiasm. When the song was over, Clive held up his head too; after the shock of the first verse, looked round with surprise and pleasure in his eyes; and we, I need not say, backed our friend, delighted to see him come out of his queer scrape so triumphantly. The Colonel bowed and smiled with very pleasant good-nature at our plaudits. It was like Dr. Primrose¹ preaching his sermon in the prison. There was something touching in the naïveté and kindness of the placid and simple gentleman.

Great Hoskins, placed on high, amidst the tuneful choir, was pleased to signify his approbation, and gave his guest's health in his usual dignified manner. "I am much obliged to you, sir," says Mr. Hoskins; "the room ought to be much obliged to you: I drink your 'ealth and song, sir"; and he bowed to the Colonel politely over his glass of brandy-and-water, of which he absorbed a little in his customer's honor. "I have not heard that song," he was kind enough to say, "better performed since Mr. Incledon sung it. He was a great singer, sir, and I may say, in the words of our immortal Shakespeare, that, take him for all in all, we shall not look upon his like again."

The Colonel blushed in his turn, and turning round to his boy with an arch smile, said, "I learnt it from Incledon. I used to slip out from Grey Friars to hear him Heaven bless me, forty years ago; and I used to be flogged afterwards, and served me right too. Lord! Lord! how the time passes!" He drank off his sherry-and-water, and fell back in his chair; we could see he was thinking about his youth—the golden time—the happy, the bright, the unforgotten. I was myself nearly two-and-twenty years of age at that period, and felt as old as, ay, older than the Colonel.

Whilst he was singing his ballad, there had walked, or

¹ In Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*.

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rather reeled, into the room, a gentleman in a military frock-coat and duck trousers of dubious hue, with whose name and person some of my readers are perhaps already acquainted. In fact it was my friend Captain Costigan, in his usual condition at this hour of the night.

Holding on by various tables, the Captain had sidled up, without accident to himself or any of the jugs and glasses round about him, to the table where we sat, and had taken his place near the writer, his old acquaintance. He warbled the refrain of the Colonel's song not inharmoniously, and saluted its pathetic conclusion with a subdued hiccough, and a plentiful effusion of tears. "Bedad it is a beautiful song," says he, "and many a time I heard poor Harry Incledon sing it."

"He's a great character," whispered that unlucky King of Corpus to his neighbor the Colonel; "was a Captain in the army. We call him the General. Captain Costigan, will you take something to drink?"

"Bedad I will," says the Captain, "and I'll sing ye a song tu."

And, having procured a glass of whiskey-and-water from the passing waiter, the poor old man, settling his face into a horrid grin, and leering, as he was wont, when he gave what he called one of his prime songs, began his music.

The unlucky wretch, who scarcely knew what he was doing or saying, selected one of the most outrageous performances of his *répertoire*, fired off a tipsy howl by way of overture, and away he went. At the end of the second verse, the Colonel started up, clapping on his hat, seizing his stick, and looking as ferocious as though he had been going to do battle with a Pindaree. "Silence!" he roared out.

"Hear, hear!" cried certain wags at a farther table. "Go on, Costigan!" said others.

"Go on!" cries the Colonel, in his high voice, trembling with anger. "Does any gentleman say, 'Go on'? Does any

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man who has a wife and sisters, or children at home, say 'Go on' to such disgusting ribaldry as this? Do you dare, sir, to call yourself a gentleman, and to say that you hold the King's commission, and to sit down amongst Christians and men of honor, and defile the ears of young boys with this wicked balderdash?"

"Why do you bring young boys here, old boy?" cries a voice of the malcontents.

"Why? Because I thought I was coming to a society of gentlemen," cried out the indignant Colonel. "Because I never could have believed that Englishmen could meet together and allow a man, and an old man, so to disgrace himself. For shame, you old wretch! Go home to your bed, you hoary old sinner! And for my part, I'm not sorry that my son should see, for once in his life, to what shame and degradation and dishonor drunkenness and whisky may bring a man. Never mind the change, sir!—Curse the change!" says the Colonel, facing the amazed waiter. "Keep it till you see me in this place again; which will be never—by George, never!" And shouldering his stick, and scowling round at the company of scared bacchanalians, the indignant gentleman stalked away, his boy after him.

Clive seemed rather shamefaced; but I fear the rest of the company looked still more foolish.

"*Aussi que diable venait-il faire dans cette galère?*"¹ says King of Corpus to Jones of Trinity; and Jones gave a shrug of his shoulders, which were smarting, perhaps; for that uplifted cane of the Colonel's had somehow fallen on the back of every man in the room.

¹ "What the devil was he doing in this galley?"—a proverbial expression from a play by Molière.

Laurence Sterne

THE hero, who tells his own story, has just crossed the strait from Dover to Calais and put up at an inn. A poor monk, of the order of Saint Francis, comes into his room to beg for his convent.

The moment I cast my eyes upon him I was predetermined not to give him a single sou; and accordingly I put my purse into my pocket, buttoned it up, set myself a little more upon my center, and advanced up gravely to him. There was something, I fear, forbidding in my look: I have his figure at this moment before my eyes, and think there was that in it which deserved better.

The monk, as I judged from the break in his tonsure, a few scattered white hairs upon his temples being all that remained of it, might be about seventy; but from his eyes, and that sort of fire which was in them, which seemed more tempered by courtesy than years, could be no more than sixty: truth might lie between—he was certainly sixty-five; and the general air of his countenance, notwithstanding something seemed to have been planting wrinkles in it before their time, agreed to the account.

It was one of those heads which Guido has often painted—mild, pale, penetrating, free from all commonplace ideas of that contented ignorance looking downwards upon the earth; it looked forwards, but looked at something beyond this world. Now one of his order came by it, Heaven above, who let it

¹ From *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*. Omissions are not indicated.

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fall upon a monk's shoulders, best knows; but it would have suited a Brahmin, and, had I met it upon the plains of Indostan, I had revered it.

The rest of his outline may be given in a few strokes; one might put it into the hands of any one to design, for 'twas neither elegant nor otherwise but as character and expression made it so: it was a thin, spare form, something above the common size, if it lost not the distinction by a bend forward in the figure—but it was the attitude of entreaty; and, as it now stands presented to my imagination, it gained more than it lost by it.

When he had entered the room three paces, he stood still; and laying his left hand upon his breast (a slender white staff with which he journeyed being in his right), when I had got close up to him he introduced himself with the little story of the wants of his convent and the poverty of his order; and did it with so simple a grace, and such an air of deprecation was there in the whole cast of his look and figure, I was bewitched not to have been struck with it.

A better reason was, I had predetermined not to give him a single sou.

"'Tis very true," said I, replying to a cast upwards with his eyes, with which he had concluded his address. "'Tis very true—and Heaven be their recourse who have no other but the charity of the world! the stock of which, I fear, is no way sufficient for the many *great claims* which are hourly made upon it."

As I pronounced the words *great claims*, he gave a slight glance with his eye downwards upon the sleeve of his tunic; I felt the full force of the appeal. "I acknowledge it," said I: "a coarse habit, and that but once in three years, with meager diet, are no great matters; and the true point of pity is, as they can be earned in the world with so little industry, that your order should wish to procure them by pressing upon

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a fund which is the property of the lame, the blind, the aged, and the infirm! The captive, who lies down counting over and over again the days of his afflictions, languishes also for his share of it; and had you had been of the *order of Mercy*, instead of the order of St. Francis, poor as I am," continued I, pointing at my portmanteau, "full cheerfully should it have been opened to you, for the ransom of the unfortunate." The monk made me a bow. "But of all others," resumed I, "the unfortunate of our own country, surely, have the first rights; and I have left thousands in distress upon our own shore." The monk gave a cordial wave with his head, as much as to say—"No doubt there is misery enough in every corner of the world, as well as within our convent." "But we distinguish," said I, laying my hand upon the sleeve of his tunic, in return for his appeal—"we distinguish, my good father, betwixt those who wish only to eat the bread of their own labor, and those who eat the bread of other people's, and have no other plan in life but to get through it in sloth and ignorance, *for the love of God.*"

The poor Franciscan made no reply: a hectic of a moment passed across his cheek, but could not tarry. Nature seemed to have had done with her resentments in him; he showed none; but letting his staff fall within his arm, he pressed both his hands with resignation upon his breast, and retired.

My heart smote me at the moment he shut the door. "Pshaw!" said I, with an air of carelessness, three several times, but it would not do; every ungracious syllable I uttered crowded back into my imagination; I reflected I had no right over the poor Franciscan but to deny him, and that the punishment of that was enough to the disappointed, without the addition of unkind language. I considered his gray hairs: his courteous figure seemed to re-enter, and gently ask me what injury he had done me, and why I could use him thus; I would have given twenty livres for an advocate. "I have

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behaved very ill," said I, within myself; "but I have only just set out upon my travels, and shall learn better manners as I get along."

The traveler meets presently with a charming lady, upon whose heart he desires to make a tender impression. As he has seen her engaged in conversation with the monk and fears that the good Franciscan by relating the discourtesy he had suffered may cool her ripening regard, he considers how he shall make amends for his rudeness. He now stands beside the lady, her hand held loosely in his own.

The good old monk was within six paces of us as the idea of him crossed my mind; and was advancing towards us a little out of the line, as if uncertain whether he should break in upon us or no. He stopped, however, as soon as he came up to us, with a world of frankness, and having a horn snuff-box in his hand, he presented it open to me. "You shall taste mine," said I, pulling out my box (which was a small tortoise one) and putting it into his hand. "'Tis most excellent," said the monk. "Then do me the favor," I replied, "to accept of the box and all; and when you take a pinch out of it, sometimes recollect it was the peace-offering of a man who once used you unkindly, but not from his heart."

The poor monk blushed as red as scarlet. "*Mon Dieu!*" said he, pressing his hands together, "you never used me unkindly." "I should think," said the lady, "it is not likely." I blushed in my turn; but from what movements, I leave to the few who feel, to analyze. "Excuse me, madam," replied I, "I treated him most unkindly; and from no provocations." "'Tis impossible," said the lady. "My God!" cried the monk, with a warmth of asseveration which seemed not to

belong to him, "the fault was in me, and in the indiscretion of my zeal." The lady opposed it; and I joined with her in maintaining it was impossible that a spirit so regulated as his could give offense to any.

I knew not that contention could be rendered so sweet and pleasurable a thing to the nerves as I then felt it. We remained silent, without any sensation of that foolish pain which takes place when in such a circle you look for ten minutes in one another's faces without saying a word. Whilst this lasted, the monk rubbed his horn-box upon the sleeve of his tunic; and as soon as it had acquired a little air of brightness by the friction, he made a low bow, and said 'twas too late to say whether it was the weakness or goodness of our tempers which had involved us in this contest, but, be it as it would, he begged we might exchange boxes. In saying this, he presented his to me with one hand, as he took mine from me in the other; and having kissed it, with a stream of good-nature in his eyes, he put it into his bosom and took his leave.

I guard this box as I would the instrumental parts of my religion, to help my mind on to something better. In truth I seldom go abroad without it; and oft and many a time have I called up by it the courteous spirit of its owner to regulate my own, in the jostlings of the world: they had found full employment for his, as I learned from his story, till about the forty-fifth year of his age, when, upon some military services ill requited, and meeting at the same time with a disappointment in the tenderest of passions, he abandoned the sword and the sex together, and took sanctuary, not so much in his convent as in himself.

I feel a damp upon my spirits as I am going to add that in my last return through Calais, upon inquiring after Father Lorenzo, I heard he had been dead near three months; and was buried, not in his convent, but, according to his desire, in a little cemetery belonging to it, about two leagues off. I had a

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strong desire to see where they had laid him, when, upon pulling out his little horn-box, as I sat by his grave, and plucking up a nettle or two at the head of it, which had no business to grow there, they all struck together so forcibly upon my affections that I burst into a flood of tears; but I am as weak as a woman; and I beg the world not to smile, but pity me.

George Meredith

EVAN HARRINGTON, a young "gentleman" in appearance and manner, but by birth the son of a tailor, is on his way to Lympport to attend his father's funeral. He has missed the coach he should have taken, and has engaged a conveyance to enable him to catch up with it. Unhappily, however, he does not think to inquire into the contents of his purse until he is some distance on the road, when, on doing so, he finds himself in an embarrassing predicament.

The postillion had every reason to believe he carried a real gentleman behind him; in other words, a purse long and liberal. He judged by all the points he knew of: a firm voice, a brief commanding style, an apparent indifference to expense, and the inexplicable minor characteristics, such as polished boots, and a striking wristband, and so forth, which will show a creature accustomed to step over the heads of men. He had, therefore, no particular anxiety to part company, and jogged easily on the white highway, beneath a moon that walked high and small over marble clouds.

About an hour after midnight pastoral stillness and the moon begat in the postillion desire for a pipe. Daylight prohibits the dream of it to mounted postillions. At night the question is more human, and allows appeal. The moon smiles assentingly, and smokers know that she really lends herself to the enjoyment of tobacco. The postillion could remember gentlemen who did not object: who had even given him

¹ From *Evan Harrington*. A passage following the first paragraph is here omitted.

cigars. Turning round to see if haply the present inmate of the chariot might be smoking, he observed a head extended from the window.

"How far are we?" was inquired.

The postillion numbered the milestones passed.

"Do you see anything of the coach?"

"Can't say as I do, sir."

He was commanded to stop. Evan jumped out.

"I don't think I'll take you any farther," he said.

The postillion laughed to scorn the notion of his caring how far he went. With a pipe in his mouth, he insinuatingly remarked, he could jog on all night, and throw sleep to the dogs. Fresh horses at Hillford; fresh at Fallowfield: and the gentleman himself would reach Lymport fresh in the morning.

"No, no; I won't take you any farther," Evan repeated.

"But what do it matter, sir?" urged the postillion.

"I'd rather go on as I am. I—a—made no arrangement to take you the whole way."

"Oh!" cried the postillion, "don't you go troublin' yourself about that, sir. Master knows it's touch-and-go about catchin' the coach. I'm all right."

So infatuated was the fellow in the belief that he was dealing with a perfect gentleman—an easy pocket!

Now you would not suppose that one who presumes he has sufficient, would find a difficulty in asking how much he has to pay. With an effort, indifferently masked, Evan blurted:

"By the way, tell me—how much—what is the charge for the distance we've come?"

There are gentlemen-screws: there are conscientious gentlemen. They calculate, and remonstrating or not, they pay. The postillion would rather have had to do with the gentleman royal, who is above base computation; but he knew the

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humanity in the class he served, and with his conception of Evan only partially dimmed, he remarked:

"Oh-h-h! that won't hurt you, sir. Jump along in,—settle that by-and-by."

But when my gentleman stood fast, and renewed the demand to know the exact charge for the distance already traversed, the postillion dismounted, glanced him over, and speculated with his fingers tipping up his hat. Meantime Evan drew out his purse, a long one, certainly, but limp. Out of this drowned-looking wretch the last spark of life was taken by the sum the postillion ventured to name; and if paying our utmost farthing without examination of the charge, and cheerfully stepping out to walk fifty miles, penniless, constituted a postillion's gentleman, Evan would have passed the test. The sight of poverty, however, provokes familiar feelings in poor men, if you have not had occasion to show them you possess particular qualities. The postillion's eye was more on the purse than on the sum it surrendered.

"There," said Evan, "I shall walk. Good night." And he flung his cloak to step forward.

"Stop a bit, sir!" arrested him.

The postillion rallied up sideways, with an assumption of genial respect. "I didn't calc'late myself in that there amount."

Were these words, think you, of a character to strike a young man hard on the breast, send the blood to his head, and set up in his heart a derisive chorus? My gentleman could pay his money, and keep his footing gallantly; but to be asked for a penny beyond what he possessed; to be seen beggared, and to be claimed a debtor—alack! Pride was the one developed faculty of Evan's nature. The Fates who mould us, always work from the mainspring. I will not say that the postillion stripped off the mask for him, at that instant completely; but he gave him the first true glimpse of his condi-

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tion. From the vague sense of being an impostor, Evan awoke to the clear fact that he was likewise a fool.

It was impossible for him to deny the man's claim, and he would not have done it, if he could. Acceding tacitly he squeezed the ends of his purse in his pocket, and with a "Let me see," tried his waistcoat. Not too impetuously; for he was careful of betraying the horrid emptiness till he was certain that the powers who wait on gentlemen had utterly forsaken him. They had not. He discovered a small coin under ordinary circumstances not contemptible; but he did not stay to reflect, and was guilty of the error of offering it to the postillion.

The latter peered at it in the center of his palm; gazed queerly in the gentleman's face, and then lifting the spit of silver for the disdain of his mistress, the moon, he drew a long breath of regret at the original mistake he had committed, and said:

"That's what you're goin' to give me for my night's work?"

The powers who wait on gentlemen had only helped the pretending youth to try him. A rejection of the demand would have been infinitely wiser and better than this paltry compromise. The postillion would have fought it: he would not have despised his fare.

How much it cost the poor pretender to reply, "It's the last farthing I have, my man," the postillion could not know.

"A scabby sixpence?" The postillion continued his question.

"You heard what I said," Evan remarked.

The postillion drew another deep breath, and holding out the coin at arm's length:

"Well, sir!" he observed, as one whom mental conflict has brought to the philosophy of the case, "now, was we to char places, I couldn't 'a' done it! I couldn't 'a' done it!" and reiterated, pausing emphatically.

"Take it, sir!" he magnanimously resumed; "take it! Y

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rides when you can, and you walks when you must. Lord forbid I should rob such a gentleman as you!"

One who feels a death, is for the hour lifted above the satire of postillions. A good genius prompted Evan to avoid the silly squabble that might have ensued and made him ridiculous. He took the money, quietly saying, "Thank you."

Not to lose his vantage, the postillion, though a little staggered by the move, rejoined: "Don't mention it."

Evan then said: "Good night, my man. I won't wish, for your sake, that we changed places. You would have to walk fifty miles to be in time for your father's funeral. Good night."

"You are it—to look at!" was the postillion's comment, seeing my gentleman depart with great strides. He did not speak offensively; rather, it seemed, to appease his conscience for the original mistake he had committed, for subsequently came, "My oath on it, I don't get took in again by a squash hat in a hurry!"

Unaware of the ban he had, by a sixpenny stamp, put upon an unoffending class, Evan went ahead, hearing the wheels of the chariot still dragging the road in his rear. The postillion was in a dissatisfied state of mind. He had asked and received more than his due. But in the matter of his sweet self, he had been choused,¹ as he termed it. And my gentleman had baffled him, he could not quite tell how; but he had been got the better of; his sarcasms had not stuck, and returned to rankle in the bosom of their author. As a Jew, therefore, may eye an crewhile bondsman who has paid the bill, but stands out against excess of interest on legal grounds, the postillion regarded Evan, of whom he was now abreast, eager for a controversy.

"Fine night," said the postillion, to begin, and was answered

¹ Cheated.

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by a short assent. "Latish for a poor man to be out—don't you think sir, eh?"

"I ought to think so," said Evan, mastering the shrewd unpleasantness he felt in the colloquy forced on him.

"Oh, you! you're a gentleman!" the postillion ejaculated.

"You see I have no money."

"Feel it, too, sir."

"I am sorry you should be the victim."

"Victim!" the postillion seized on an objectionable word.

"I ain't no victim, unless you was up to a joke with me, sir, just now. Was that the game?"

Evan informed him that he never played jokes with money, or on men.

"'Cause it looks like it, sir, to go to offer a poor chap sixpence." The postillion laughed hollow from the end of his lungs. "Sixpence for a night's work! It *is* a joke, if you don't mean it for one. Why, do you know, sir, I could go—there, I don't care where it is!—I could go before any magistrate livin', and he'd make ye pay. It's a charge, as custom is, and he'd make ye pay. Or p'rhaps you're a goin' on my generosity, and 'll say, he gev back that sixpence! Well! I shouldn't 'a' thought a gentleman 'd make that his defense before a magistrate. But there, my man! if it makes ye happy, keep it. But you take my advice, sir. When you hires a chariot, see you've got the shiners. And don't you go never again offerin' a sixpence to a poor man for a night's work. They don't like it. It hurts their feelin's. Don't you forget that, sir. Lay that up in your mind."

Now the postillion having thus relieved himself, jeeringly asked permission to smoke a pipe. To which Evan said, "Pray, smoke, if it pleases you." And the postillion, hardly mollified, added, "The baccy's paid for," and smoked.

As will sometimes happen, the feelings of the man who had spoken out and behaved doubtfully, grew gentle and Christian,

whereas those of the man whose bearing under the trial had been irreproachable were much the reverse. The postillion smoked—he was a lord on his horse; he beheld my gentleman trudging in the dust. Awhile he enjoyed the contrast, dividing his attention between the footfarer and moon. To have had the last word is always a great thing; and to have given my gentleman a lecture, because he shunned a dispute, also counts. And then there was the poor young fellow trudging to his father's funeral! The postillion chose to remember that now. In reality, he allowed, he had not very much to complain of, and my gentleman's courteous avoidance of provocation (the apparent fact that he, the postillion, had humbled him and got the better of him, equally, it may be), acted on his fine English spirit. I should not like to leave out the tobacco in this good change that was wrought in him. However, he presently astonished Evan by pulling up his horses, and crying that he was on his way to Hillford to bait, and saw no reason why he should not take a lift that part of the road, at all events. Evan thanked him briefly, but declined, and paced on with his head bent.

"It won't cost you nothing—not a sixpence!" the postillion sang out, pursuing him. "Come, sir! be a man! I ain't a hintin' at anything—jump in."

Evan again declined, and looked out for a side path to escape the fellow, whose bounty was worse to him than his abuse, and whose mention of the sixpence was unlucky.

"Dash it!" cried the postillion, "you're going down to a funeral—I think you said your father's, sir—you may as well try and get there respectable—as far as *I* go. It's one to me whether you're in or out; the horses won't feel it, and I do wish you'd take a lift and welcome. It's because you're too much of a gentleman to be beholden to a poor man, I suppose!"

Evan's young pride may have had a little of that base mixture in it, and certainly he would have preferred that the in-

vation had not been made to him; but he was capable of appreciating what the rejection of a piece of friendliness involved, and as he saw that the man was sincere, he did violence to himself, and said: "Very well; then I'll jump in."

The postillion was off his horse in a twinkling, and trotted his bandy legs to undo the door, as to a gentleman who paid. This act of service Evan valued.

"Suppose I were to ask you to take the sixpence now?" he said, turning round, with one foot on the step.

"Well, sir," the postillion sent his hat aside to answer. "I don't want it—I'd rather not have it; but there! I'll take it—dash the sixpence! and we'll cry quits."

Evan, surprised and pleased with him, dropped the bit of money in his hand, saying: "It will fill a pipe for you. While you're smoking it, think of me as in your debt. You're the only man I ever owed a penny to."

The postillion put it in a side pocket apart, and observed: "A sixpence kindly meant is worth any crown-piece that's grudged—that it is! In you jump, sir. It's a jolly night!"

Thus may one, not a conscious sage, play the right tune on this human nature of ours: by forbearance, put it in the wrong; and then, by not refusing the burden of an obligation, confer something better. The instrument is simpler than we are taught to fancy. But it was doubtless owing to a strong emotion in his soul, as well as to the stuff he was made of, that the youth behaved as he did. We are now and then above our own actions; seldom on a level with them. Evan, I dare say, was long in learning to draw any gratification from the fact that he had achieved without money the unparalleled conquest of a man. Perhaps he never knew what immediate influence on his fortune this episode effected.

At Hillford they went their different ways. The postillion wished him good speed, and Evan shook his hand. He did so

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rather abruptly, for the postillion was fumbling at his pocket, and evidently rounding about a proposal in his mind.

My gentleman has now the road to himself. Money is the clothing of a gentleman: he may wear it well or ill. Some, you will mark, carry great quantities of it gracefully: some, with a stinted supply, present a decent appearance: very few, I imagine, will bear inspection, who are absolutely stripped of it. All, save the shameless, are toiling to escape that trial. My gentleman, treading the white highway across the solitary heaths, that swell far and wide to the moon, is, by the postillion, who has seen him, pronounced no sham. Nor do I think the opinion of any man worthless, who has had the postillion's authority for speaking. But it is, I am told, a finer test to embellish much gentleman-apparel, than to walk with dignity totally unadorned. This simply tries the soundness of our faculties: that tempts them in erratic directions. It is the difference between active and passive excellence.

As there is hardly any situation, however, so interesting to reflect upon as that of a man without a penny in his pocket, and a gizzard full of pride, we will leave Mr. Evan Harrington to what fresh adventures may befall him, walking towards the funeral plumes of the firs, under the soft midsummer flush, westward, where his father lies.

George Meredith

THE persons are Richard Feverel, a youth nearly eighteen, and Lucy Desborough. Richard's father, Sir Austin Feverel of Raynham Abbey—"Scientific Humanist" and author of a selection of original aphorisms called "*The Pilgrim's Scrip*"—has brought him up in strict accordance with a theoretical scheme of education known briefly as the "*System*." Richard and Lucy have met before, several years before, at Belthorpe, the home of Farmer Blaize, Lucy's uncle. At this meeting Farmer Blaize had rather proudly introduced the thirteen-year-old girl as the daughter of a lieutenant in the royal navy, and as connected with the worthy Desboroughs of Dorset, but Richard had remained indifferent both to Lucy herself and to anything that was said about her. He has now forgotten her completely. Lucy's fancy, however, was promptly caught by the handsome lad, and ever since their first meeting he has been in her thoughts. She is now in possession of some love verses of Richard's composition. Richard, who has spent the night in feverish visions of knights and ladies and of "a hand glittering white and fragrant," and who now in the early morning is rowing or floating down a stream of water, is plainly "ripe for love": before us stands Lucy, the temple which the Fates have furnished for the flame.

¹ From *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*.

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I

When nature has made us ripe for love, it seldom occurs that the Fates are behindhand in furnishing a temple for the flame.

Above green-flashing plunges of a weir, and shaken by the thunder below, lilies, golden and white, were swaying at anchor among the reeds. Meadow-sweet hung from the banks thick with weed and trailing bramble, and there also hung a daughter of earth. Her face was shaded by a broad straw hat with a flexible brim that left her lips and chin in the sun, and, sometimes nodding, sent forth a light of promising eyes. Across her shoulders, and behind, flowed large loose curls, brown in shadow, almost golden where the ray touched them. She was simply dressed, befitting decency and the season. On a closer inspection you might see that her lips were stained. This blooming young person was regaling on dewberries. They grew between the bank and the water. Apparently she found the fruit abundant, for her hand was making pretty progress to her mouth. Fastidious youth, which revolts at woman plumping her exquisite proportions on bread-and-butter, and would (we must suppose) joyfully have her scraggy to have her poetical, can hardly object to dewberries. Indeed the act of eating them is dainty and induces musing. The dewberry is a sister to the lotus, and an innocent sister. You eat, mouth, eye, and hand are occupied, and the undrugged mind free to roam. And so it was with the damsel who knelt there. The little skylark went up above her, all song, to the smooth southern cloud lying along the blue: from a dewy copse dark over her nodding hat the blackbird fluted, calling to her with thrice mellow note: the kingfisher flashed emerald out of green osiers: a bow-winged heron traveled aloft, seeking solitude: a boat slipped toward her, containing a dreamy youth; and still she plucked the fruit, and ate, and mused, as if no

fairy prince were invading her territories, and as if she wished not for one, or knew not her wishes. Surrounded by the green shaven meadows, the pastoral summer buzz, the weir-fall's thundering white, amid the breath and beauty of wild flowers, she was a bit of lovely human life in a fair setting; a terrible attraction. The Magnetic Youth leaned round to note his proximity to the weir-piles, and beheld the sweet vision. Still and stiller grew nature, as at the meeting of two electric clouds. Her posture was so graceful, that though he was making straight for the weir, he dared not dip a scull. Just then one enticing dewberry caught her eyes. He was floating by unheeded, and saw that her hand stretched low, and could not gather what it sought. A stroke from his right brought him beside her. The damsel glanced up dismayed and her whole shape trembled over the brink. Richard sprang from his boat into the water. Pressing a hand beneath her foot, which she thrust against the crumbling wet sides of the bank to save herself, he enabled her to recover her balance, and gain safe earth, whither he followed her.

II

He had landed on an island of the still-vexed Bermoothes. The world lay wrecked behind him: Raynham hung in mists, remote, a phantom to the vivid reality of this white hand which had drawn him thither away thousands of leagues in an eye-twinkle. Hark, how Ariel sang overhead! What splendor in the heavens! What marvels of beauty about his enchanted brows! And, O you wonder! Fair Flame! by whose light the glories of being are now first seen. . . . Radiant Miranda! Prince Ferdinand is at your feet.

Or is it Adam, his rib taken from his side in sleep, and thus transformed, to make him behold his Paradise, and lose it? . . .

The youth looked on her with as glowing an eye. It was The First Woman to him.

And she—mankind was all Caliban to her, saving this one princely youth.

So to each other said their changing eyes in the moment they stood together; he pale, and she blushing.

She was indeed sweetly fair, and would have been held fair among rival damsels. On a magic shore, and to a youth educated by a System, strung like an arrow drawn to the head, she, it might be guessed, could fly fast and far with her. The soft rose in her cheeks, the clearness of her eyes, bore witness to the body's virtue: and health and happy blood were in her bearing. Had she stood before Sir Austin among rival damsels, that Scientific Humanist, for the consummation of his System, would have thrown her the handkerchief for his son. The wide summer-hat, nodding over her forehead to her brows, seemed to flow with the flowing heavy curls, and those fire-threaded mellow curls, only half-curls, waves of hair call them, rippling at the ends, went like a sunny red-veined torrent down her back almost to her waist: a glorious vision to the youth, who embraced it as a flower of beauty, and read not a feature. There were curious features of color in her face for him to have read. Her brows, thick and brownish against a soft skin showing the action of the blood, met in the bend of a bow, extending to the temples long and level: you saw that she was fashioned to peruse the sighs of earth, and by the pliability of her brows that the wonderful creature used her faculty, and was not going to be a statue to the gazer. Under the dark thick brows an arch of lashes shot out, giving a wealth of darkness to the full frank blue eyes, a mystery of meaning—more than brain was ever meant to fathom: richer, henceforth, than all mortal wisdom to Prince Ferdinand. For when nature turns artist, and produces contrasts of color

on a fair face, where is the Sage, or what the Oracle, shall match the depth of its lightest look.

Prince Ferdinand was also fair. In his slim boating-attire his figure looked heroic. His hair, rising from the parting to the right of his forehead, in what his admiring Lady Blamish called his plume, fell away slanting silkily to the temple across the nearly imperceptible upward curve of his brow there—felt more than seen, so slight it was—and gave to his profile a bold beauty, to which his bashful, breathless air was a flattering charm. An arrow drawn to the head, capable of flying fast and far with her! He leaned a little forward drinking her in with all his eyes, and young Love has a thousand. Then truly the System triumphed, just ere it was to fall; and could Sir Austin have been content to draw the arrow to the head, and let it fly, when it would fly, he might have pointed to his son again, and said to the world, "Match him!" Such keen bliss as the youth had in the sight of her, and an innocent youth alone has powers of soul in him to experience

"O Women!" says THE PILGRIM'S SCRIP, in one of its solitary outbursts, "Women, who like, and will have for heroes a rake! how soon are you not to learn that you have taken bankrupts to your bosoms, and that the putrescent gold that attracted you is the slime of the Lake of Sin!"

If these two were Ferdinand and Miranda, Sir Austin was not Prospero, and was not present, or their fates might have been different.

So they stood a moment, changing eyes, and then Miranda spoke, and they came down to earth, feeling no less in heaven.

She spoke to thank him for his aid. She used quite common simple words; and used them, no doubt, to express common simple meaning: but to him she was uttering magic casting spells, and the effect they had on him was manifest

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in the incoherence of his replies, which were too foolish to be chronicled.

The couple were again mute. Suddenly Miranda, with an exclamation of anguish, and innumerable lights and shadows playing over her lovely face, clapped her hands, crying aloud, "My book! my book!" and ran to the bank.

Prince Ferdinand was at her side. "What have you lost?" he said.

"My book!" she answered, her delicious curls swinging across her shoulders to the stream. Then turning to him, "Oh no, no! let me entreat you not to," she said; "I do not so very much mind losing it." And in her eagerness to restrain him she unconsciously laid her gentle hand upon his arm, and took the force of motion out of him.

"Indeed, I do not really care for the silly book," she continued, withdrawing her hand quickly, and reddening. "Pray, do not!"

The young gentleman had kicked off his shoes. No sooner was the spell of contact broken than he jumped in. The water was still troubled and discolored by his introductory adventure, and, though he ducked his head with the spirit of a dabchick, the book was missing. A scrap of paper floating from the bramble just above the water, and looking as if fire had brought its edges and it had flown from one adverse element to the other, was all he could lay hold of; and he returned to land disconsolately, to hear Miranda's murmured mixing of thanks and pretty expostulations.

"Let me try again," he said.

"No, indeed!" she replied, and used the awful threat: "I will run away if you do," which effectually restrained him.

Her eye fell on the fire-stained scrap of paper, and brightened, as she cried, "There, there! you have what I want. It is that. I do not care for the book. No, please! You are not to look at it. Give it me."

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Before her playfully imperative injunction was fairly spoken, Richard had glanced at the document and discovered a Griffin between two Wheatsheaves: his crest in silver: and below—O wonderment immense! his own handwriting!

He handed it to her. She took it, and put it in her bosom.

Who would have thought, that, where all else perished, Odes, Idyls, Lines, Stanzas, this one Sonnet to the stars should be miraculously reserved for such a starry fate—passing beatitude!

As they walked silently across the meadow, Richard strove to remember the hour and the mood of mind in which he had composed the notable production. The stars were invoked, as seeing and foreseeing all, to tell him where then his love reclined, and so forth; Hesper was complacent enough to do so, and described her in a couplet—

“Through sunset’s amber see me shining fair,
As her blue eyes shine through her golden hair.”

And surely no words could be more prophetic. Here were two blue eyes and golden hair; and by some strange chance, that appeared like the working of a divine finger, she had become the possessor of the prophecy, she that was to fulfill it! The youth was too charged with emotion to speak. Doubtless the damsel had less to think of, or had some trifling burden on her conscience, for she seemed to grow embarrassed. At last she drew up her chin to look at her companion under the nodding brim of her hat (and the action gave her a charmingly freakish air), crying, “But where are you going to? You are wet through. Let me thank you again; and, pray, leave me, and go home and change instantly.”

“Wet?” replied the magnetic muser, with a voice of tender interest; “not more than one foot, I hope. I will leave you while you dry your stockings in the sun.”

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At this she could not withhold a shy laugh.

"Not I, but you. You would try to get that silly book for me, and you are dripping wet. Are you not very uncomfortable?"

In all sincerity he assured her that he was not.

"And you really do not feel that you are wet?"

He really did not: and it was a fact that he spoke truth.

She pursed her dewberry mouth in the most comical way, and her blue eyes lightened laughter out of the half-closed lids.

"I cannot help it," she said, her mouth opening, and sounding harmonious bells of laughter in his ears. "Pardon me, won't you?"

His face took the same soft smiling curves in admiration of her.

"Not to feel that you have been in the water, the very moment after!" she musically interjected, seeing she was excused.

"It's true," he said; and his own gravity then touched him to join a duet with her, which made them no longer feel strangers, and did the work of a month of intimacy. Better than sentiment, laughter opens the breast to love; opens the whole breast to his full quiver, instead of a corner here and there for a solitary arrow. Hail the occasion propitious, O British young! and laugh and treat love as an honest God, and dabble not with the sentimental rouge. These two laughed, and the souls of each cried out to other, "It is I, it is I."

They laughed and forgot the cause of their laughter, and the sun dried his light river clothing, and they strolled toward the blackbird's copse, and stood near a stile in sight of the foam of the weir and the many-colored rings of eddies streaming forth from it.

Richard's boat, meanwhile, had contrived to shoot the weir,

and was swinging, bottom upward, broadside with the current down the rapid backwater.

"Will you let it go?" said the damsel, eying it curiously.

"It can't be stopped," he replied, and could have added, "What do I care for it now!"

His old life was whirled away with it, dead, drowned. His new life was with her, alive, divine.

She flapped low the brim of her hat. "You must really not come any farther," she softly said.

"And will you go, and not tell me who you are?" he asked, growing bold as the fears of losing her came across him. "And will you not tell me before you go"—his face burned—"how you came by that—that paper?"

She chose to select the easier question for answer: "You ought to know me; we have been introduced." Sweet was her winning offhand affability.

"Then who, in Heaven's name, are you? Tell me! I never could have forgotten you."

"You have, I think," she said.

"Impossible that we could ever have met, and I forget you!"

She looked up at him.

"Do you remember Belthorpe?"

"Belthorpe! Belthorpe!" quoth Richard, as if he had to touch his brain to recollect there was such a place. "Do you mean old Blaize's farm?"

"Then I am old Blaize's niece." She tripped him a soft curtsy.

The magnetized youth gazed at her. By what magic was it that this divine sweet creature could be allied with that old churl!

"Then what—what is your name?" said his mouth, while his eyes added: "O wonderful creature! How came you to enrich the earth?"

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"Have you forgot the Desboroughs of Dorset, too?" She peered at him from a side-bend of the flapping brim.

"The Desboroughs of Dorset?" A light broke in on him. "And have you grown to this? That little girl I saw there!"

He drew close to her to read the nearest features of the vision. She could no more laugh off the piercing fervor of his eyes. Her volubility fluttered under his deeply wistful look, and now neither voice was high, and they were mutually constrained.

"You see," she murmured, "we are old acquaintances."

Richard, with his eyes still intently fixed on her, returned, "You are very beautiful!"

The words slipped out. Perfect simplicity is unconsciously audacious. Her overpowering beauty struck his heart, and, like an instrument that is touched and answers to the touch, he spoke.

Miss Desborough made an effort to trifle with this terrible directness; but his eyes would not be gainsaid, and checked her lips. She turned away from them, her bosom a little rebellious. Praise so passionately spoken, and by one who has been a damsel's first dream, dreamed of nightly many long nights, and clothed in the virgin silver of her thoughts in bud, praise from him is coin the heart cannot reject, if it would. She quickened her steps.

"I have offended you!" said a mortally wounded voice across her shoulder.

That he should think so were too dreadful.

"Oh no, no! you would never offend me." She gave him her whole sweet face.

"Then why—why do you leave me?"

"Because," she hesitated, "I must go."

"No. You must not go. Why must you go? Do not go."

"Indeed I must," she said, pulling at the obnoxious broad brim of her hat; and, interpreting a pause he made for his

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assent to her rational resolve, shyly looking at him, she held her hand out, and said, "Good-by," as if it were a natural thing to say.

The hand was pure white—white and fragrant as the frosted blossom of a May-night. It was the hand whose shadow, cast before, he had last night bent his head reverentially above, and kissed—resigning himself thereupon over to execution for payment of the penalty of such daring—by such bliss well rewarded.

He took the hand, and held it, gazing between her eyes.

"Good-by," she said again, as frankly as she could, and at the same time slightly compressing her fingers on his in token of adieu. It was a signal for his to close firmly upon hers.

"You will not go?"

"Pray, let me," she pleaded, her sweet brows suing in wrinkles.

"You will not go?" Mechanically he drew the white hand nearer his thumping heart.

"I must," she faltered piteously.

"You will not go?"

"Oh yes! yes!"

"Tell me. Do you wish to go?"

The question was a subtle one. A moment or two she did not answer, and then forswore herself, and said, Yes.

"Do you—you wish to go?" He looked with quivering eyelids under hers.

A fainter Yes responded.

"You wish—wish to leave me?" His breath went with the words.

"Indeed I must."

Her hand became a closer prisoner.

All at once an alarming delicious shudder went through her frame. From him to her it coursed, and back from her to him. Forward and back love's electric messenger rushed

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from heart to heart, knocking at each, till it surged tumultuously against the bars of its prison, crying out for its mate. They stood trembling in unison, a lovely couple under these fair heavens of the morning.

When he could get his voice it said, "Will you go?"

But she had none to reply with, and could only mutely bend upward her gentle wrist.

"Then, farewell!" he said, and, dropping his lips to the soft fair hand, kissed it, and hung his head, swinging away from her, ready for death.

Strange, that now she was released she should linger by him. Strange, that his audacity, instead of the executioner, brought blushes and timid tenderness to his side, and the sweet words, "You are not angry with me?"

"With you, O Beloved!" cried his soul. "And you forgive me, fair charity!"

"I think it was rude of me to go without thanking you again," she said, and again proffered her hand.

The sweet heaven-bird shivered out his song above him. The gracious glory of heaven fell upon his soul. He touched her hand, not moving his eyes from her, nor speaking, and she, with a soft word of farewell, passed across the stile, and up the pathway through the dewy shades of the copse, and out of the arch of the light, away from his eyes.

III

Away with Systems! Away with a corrupt World! Let us breathe the air of the Enchanted Island.

Golden lie the meadows: golden run the streams; red gold is on the pine-stems. The sun is coming down to earth, and walks the fields and the waters.

The sun is coming down to earth, and the fields and the waters shout to him golden shouts. He comes, and his heralds

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run before him, and touch the leaves of oaks and planes and beeches lucid green, and the pine-stems redder gold; leaving brightest footprints upon thickly-weeded banks, where the foxglove's last upper-bells incline, and bramble-shoots wander amid moist rich herbage. The plumes of the woodland are alight; and beyond them, over the open, 'tis a race with the long-thrown shadows; a race across the heaths and up the hills, till, at the farthest bourne of mounted eastern cloud, the heralds of the sun lay rosy fingers and rest.

Sweet are the shy recesses of the woodland. The ray treads softly there. A film athwart the pathway quivers many-hued against purple shade fragrant with warm pines, deep moss-beds, feathery ferns. The little brown squirrel drops tail, and leaps; the inmost bird is startled to a chance tuneless note. From silence into silence things move.

Peeps of the reveling splendor above and around enliven the conscious full heart within. The flaming west, the crimson heights, shower their glories through voluminous leafage. But these are bowers where deep bliss dwells, imperial joy, that owes no fealty to yonder glories, in which the young lamb gambols and the spirits of men are glad. Descend, great Radiance! embrace creation with beneficent fire, and pass from us! You and the vice-regal light that succeeds to you, and all heavenly pageants, are the ministers and the slaves of the throbbing content within.

For this is the home of the enchantment. Here, secluded from vexed shores, the prince and princess of the island meet: here like darkling nightingales they sit, and into eyes and ears and hands pour endless ever-fresh treasures of their souls.

Roll on, grinding wheels of the world: cries of ships going down in a calm, groans of a System which will not know its rightful hour of exultation, complain to the universe. You are not heard here.

He calls her by her name, Lucy: and she, blushing at her

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great boldness, has called him by his, Richard. Those two names are the key-notes of the wonderful harmonies the angels sing aloft.

"Lucy! my beloved!"

"O Richard!"

Out in the world there, on the skirts of the woodland, a sheep-boy pipes to meditative eve on a penny-whistle.

Love's musical instrument is as old, and as poor: it has but two stops; and yet, you see, the cunning musician does thus much with it!

Other speech they have little; light foam playing upon waves of feeling, and of feeling compact, that bursts only when the sweeping volume is too wild, and is no more than their sigh of tenderness spoken.

Perhaps love played his tune so well because their natures had unblunted edges, and were keen for bliss, confiding in it as natural food. To gentlemen and ladies he fine-draws upon the viol, ravishingly; or blows into the mellow bassoon; or rouses the heroic ardors of the trumpet; or, it may be, commands the whole Orchestra for them. And they are pleased. He is still the cunning musician. They languish, and taste ecstasy: but it is, however sonorous, an earthly concert. For them the spheres move not to two notes. They have lost, or forfeited and never known, the first supersensual spring of the ripe senses into passion; when they carry the soul with them, and have the privileges of spirits to walk disembodied, boundlessly to feel. Or one has it, and the other is a dead body. Ambrosia let them eat, and drink the nectar: here sit a couple to whom Love's simple bread and water is a finer feast.

Pipe, happy sheep-boy, Love! Irradiated angels, unfold your wings and lift your voices!

They have outflown philosophy. Their instinct has shot beyond the ken of science. They were made for their Eden.

"And this divine gift was in store for me!"

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So runs the internal outcry of each, clasping each: it is their recurring refrain to the harmonies. How it illumined the years gone by and suffused the living Future!

"You for me: I for you!"

"We are born for each other!"

They believe that the angels have been busy about them from their cradles. The celestial hosts have worthily striven to bring them together. And, O victory! O wonder! after toil and pain, and difficulties exceeding, the celestial hosts have succeeded!

"Here we two sit who are written above as one!"

Pipe, happy Love! pipe on to these dear innocents!

The tide of color has ebbed from the upper sky. In the west the sea of sunken fire draws back; and the stars leap forth, and tremble, and retire before the advancing moon, who slips the silver train of cloud from her shoulders, and, with her foot upon the pine-tops, surveys heaven.

"Lucy, did you never dream of meeting me?"

"O Richard! yes; for I remembered you."

"Lucy! and did you pray that we might meet?"

"I did!"

Young as when she looked upon the lovers in Paradise, the fair Immortal journeys onward. Fronting her, it is not night but veiled day. Full half the sky is flushed. Not darkness, not day, but the nuptials of the two.

"My own! my own forever! You are pledged to me? Whisper!"

He hears the delicious music.

"And you are mine?"

A soft beam travels to the fern-covert under the pinewood where they sit, and for answer he has her eyes: turned to him an instant, timidly fluttering over the depths of his, and then downcast; for through her eyes her soul is naked to him.

"Lucy! my bride! my life!"

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The night-jar spins his dark monotony on the branch of the pine. The soft beam travels round them, and listens to their hearts. Their lips are locked.

Pipe no more, Love, for a time! Pipe as you will you cannot express their first kiss; nothing of its sweetness, and of the sacredness of it nothing. St. Cecilia up aloft, before the silver organ-pipes of Paradise, pressing fingers upon all the notes of which Love is but one, from her you may hear it.

So Love is silent. Out in the world there, on the skirts of the woodland, the self-satisfied sheep-boy delivers a last complacent squint down the length of his penny-whistle, and, with a flourish correspondingly awry, he also marches into silence, hailed by supper. The woods are still. There is heard but the night-jar spinning on the pine-branch, circled by moonlight.

A SYMPOSIUM¹*Thomas Love Peacock*

Boswell. "So, sir, you laugh at schemes of political improvement."

Johnson. "Why, sir, most schemes of political improvement are very laughable things."

A DINNER is in progress at Crotchet Castle. The host, who sits at the head of the table, is Mr. Crotchet the elder, a retired citizen extremely fond of argument and very liberal in his invitations. About him are gathered "a detachment from the advanced guard of the 'march of mind.'" Their names, we learn, are indicative of their mental dispositions, even when the connection is not immediately obvious. *Mr. Mac Quedy, for example, is Mr. Mac Q. E. D., the son of a demonstration; Mr. Skionar derives from Greek words signifying "the dream of a shadow"; and Mr. Philpot, also of Greek ancestry, is a "lover of rivers."* The characters of the group are about to be sketched by Lady Clarinda: to her descriptions it is only necessary to add that Mr. Mac Quedy is a Scotchman who has stirred the wrath of the Reverend Dr. Folliott by claiming for himself and his countrymen the title of "the modern Athenians." Lady Clarinda is being sought in marriage by Mr. Crotchet the younger, who has made himself rich by the "blow-

¹ From *Crotchet Castle*. For the epigraph the present editors are responsible.

ing of bubbles," that is to say, by promoting investment schemes of a worthless kind. A second suitor for her hand is Captain Fitzchrome (named in allusion to his avocation as painter), a half-pay officer who in point of fortune is no match for his rival. The captain has no more depth of learning than is proper to his profession and rank, though the Lady Clarinda has mischievously recommended him to Mr. Mac Quedy as interested in political economy, to Mr. Skionar as curious regarding the question of subjective reality, and to the Reverend Dr. Folliott as an enthusiastic lover of Greek poetry. The "rigmarole" referred to in the first sentence is a spirited dispute on what may be done for a man by education.

I

CHARACTERS

Lady Clarinda. [To the captain.] I declare the creature has been listening to all this rigmarole, instead of attending to me. Do you ever expect forgiveness? But now that they are all talking together, and you cannot make out a word they say, nor they hear a word that we say, I will describe the company to you. First, there is the old gentleman on my left hand, at the head of the table, who is now leaning the other way to talk to my brother. He is a good-tempered, half-informed person, very unreasonably fond of reasoning, and of reasoning people; people that talk nonsense logically: he is fond of disputation himself, when there are only one or two, but seldom does more than listen in a large company of *illuminés*.¹ He made a great fortune in the city, and has the comfort of a good conscience. He is very hospitable, and is generous in dinners; though nothing would induce him to give

¹ Intellectuals.

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sixpence to the poor, because he holds that all misfortune is from imprudence, that none but the rich ought to marry, and that all ought to thrive by honest industry, as he did. He is ambitious of founding a family, and of allying himself with nobility; and is thus as willing as other grown children to throw away thousands for a gewgaw, though he would not part with a penny for charity. Next to him is my brother, whom you know as well as I do. He has finished his education with credit, and as he never ventures to oppose me in anything, I have no doubt he is very sensible. He has good manners, is a model of dress, and is reckoned ornamental in all societies. Next to him is Miss Crotchet, my sister-in-law that is to be. You see she is rather pretty, and very genteel. She is tolerably accomplished, has her table always covered with new novels, thinks Mr. Mac Quedy an oracle, and is extremely desirous to be called "my lady." Next to her is Mr. Firedamp, a very absurd person, who thinks that water is the evil principle. Next to him is Mr. Eavesdrop, a man who, by dint of a certain something like smartness, has got into good society. He is a sort of bookseller's tool, and coins all his acquaintance in reminiscences and sketches of character. I am very shy of him, for fear he should print me.

Captain Fitzchrome. If he print you in your own likeness, which is that of an angel, you need not fear him. If he print you in any other, I will cut his throat. But proceed——

Lady Clarinda. Next to him is Mr. Henbane, the toxicologist, I think he calls himself. He has passed half his life in studying poisons and antidotes. The first thing he did on his arrival here, was to kill the cat; and while Miss Crotchet was crying over her, he brought her to life again. I am more shy of him than the other.

Captain Fitzchrome. They are two very dangerous fellows, and I shall take care to keep them both at a respectful dis-

tance. Let us hope that Eavesdrop will sketch off Henbane, and that Henbane will poison him for his trouble.

Lady Clarinda. Well, next to him sits Mr. Mac Quedy, the Modern Athenian, who lays down the law about everything, and therefore may be taken to understand everything. He turns all the affairs of this world into questions of buying and selling. He is the Spirit of the Frozen Ocean to everything like romance and sentiment. He condenses their volume of steam into a drop of cold water in a moment. He has satisfied me that I am a commodity in the market, and that I ought to set myself at a high price. So you see he who would have me must bid for me.

Captain Fitzchrome. I shall discuss that point with Mr. Mac Quedy.

Lady Clarinda. Not a word for your life. Our flirtation is our own secret. Let it remain so.

Captain Fitzchrome. Flirtation, Clarinda! Is that all that the most ardent——

Lady Clarinda. Now, don't be rhapsodical here. Next to Mr. Mac Quedy is Mr. Skionar, a sort of poetical philosopher, a curious compound of the intense and the mystical. He abominates all the ideas of Mr. Mac Quedy, and settles everything by sentiment and intuition.

Captain Fitzchrome. Then, I say, he is the wiser man.

Lady Clarinda. They are two oddities; but a little of them is amusing, and I like to hear them dispute. So you see I am in training for a philosopher myself.

Captain Fitzchrome. Any philosophy, for heaven's sake, but the pound-shilling-and-pence philosophy of Mr. Mac Quedy.

Lady Clarinda. Why, they say that even Mr. Skionar, though he is a great dreamer, always dreams with his eyes open, or with one eye at any rate, which is an eye to his gain: but I believe that in this respect the poor man has got an ill

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name by keeping bad company. He has two dear friends, Mr. Wilful Wontsee, and Mr. Rumblesack Shantsee, poets of some note, who used to see visions of Utopia, and pure republics beyond the Western deep: but finding that these El Dorados brought them no revenue, they turned their vision-seeing faculty into the more profitable channel of espying all sorts of virtues in the high and the mighty, who were able and willing to pay for the discovery.¹

Captain Fitzchrome. I do not fancy these virtue-spyers.

Lady Clarinda. Next to Mr. Skionar, sits Mr. Chainmail, a good-looking young gentleman, as you see, with very antiquated tastes. He is fond of old poetry, and is something of a poet himself. He is deep in monkish literature, and holds that the best state of society was that of the twelfth century, when nothing was going forward but fighting, feasting, and praying, which he says are the three great purposes for which man was made. He laments bitterly over the inventions of gunpowder, steam, and gas, which he says have ruined the world. He lives within two or three miles, and has a large hall, adorned with rusty pikes, shields, helmets, swords, and tattered banners, and furnished with yew-tree chairs, and two long, old, worm-eaten oak tables, where he dines with all his household, after the fashion of his favorite age. He wants us all to dine with him, and I believe we shall go.

Captain Fitzchrome. That will be something new at any rate.

Lady Clarinda. Next to him is Mr. Toogood, the co-operationist, who will have neither fighting nor praying; but wants to parcel out the world into squares like a chess-board, with a community on each, raising everything for one another, with a great steam-engine to serve them in common for tailor and hosier, kitchen and cook.

¹ In the characters of Mr. Skionar, Mr. Wilful Wontsee, and Mr. Rumblesack Shantsee, Peacock glances satirically at Coleridge and his friends William Wordsworth and Robert Southey.

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Captain Fitzchrome. He is the strangest of the set, so far.

Lady Clarinda. This brings us to the bottom of the table, where sits my humble servant, Mr. Crotchet the younger. I ought not to describe him.

Captain Fitzchrome. I entreat you do.

Lady Clarinda. Well, I really have very little to say in his favor.

Captain Fitzchrome. I do not wish to hear anything in his favor; and I rejoice to hear you say so, because——

Lady Clarinda. Do not flatter yourself. If I take him, it will be to please my father, and to have a town and country house, and plenty of servants, and a carriage and an opera-box, and make some of my acquaintance who have married for love, or for rank, or for anything but money, die for envy of my jewels. You do not think I would take him for himself. Why, he is very smooth and spruce, as far as his dress goes; but as to his face, he looks as if he had tumbled headlong into a volcano, and had been thrown up again among the cinders.

Captain Fitzchrome. I cannot believe, that, speaking thus of him, you mean to take him at all.

Lady Clarinda. Oh! I am out of my teens. I have been very much in love; but now I am come to years of discretion, and must think, like other people, of settling myself advantageously. He was in love with a banker's daughter, and cast her off on her father's bankruptcy, and the poor girl has gone to hide herself in some wild place.

Captain Fitzchrome. She must have a strange taste, if she pines for the loss of him.

Lady Clarinda. They say he was good-looking, till his bubble-schemes, as they call them, stamped him with the physiognomy of a desperate gambler. I suspect he has still a *penchant*¹ towards his first flame. If he takes me, it will be

¹ Leaning.

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for my rank and connection, and the second seat of the borough of Rogueingrain. So we shall meet on equal terms, and shall enjoy all the blessedness of expecting nothing from each other.

Captain Fitzchrome. You can expect no security with such an adventurer.

Lady Clarinda. I shall have the security of a good settlement, and then if *andare al diavolo*¹ be his destiny, he may go, you know, by himself. He is almost always dreaming and *distract*.² It is very likely that some great reverse is in store for him: but that will not concern me, you perceive.

Captain Fitzchrome. You torture me, Clarinda, with the bare possibility.

Lady Clarinda. Hush! Here is music to soothe your troubled spirit. Next to him, on this side, sits the dilettante composer, Mr. Trillo; they say his name was O'Trill, and he has taken the O from the beginning, and put it at the end. I do not know how this may be. He plays well on the violoncello, and better on the piano: sings agreeably; has a talent at verse-making, and improvises a song with some felicity. He is very agreeable company in the evening, with his instruments and music-books. He maintains that the sole end of all enlightened society is to get up a good opera, and laments that wealth, genius, and energy, are squandered upon other pursuits, to the neglect of this one great matter.

Captain Fitzchrome. That is a very pleasant fancy at any rate.

Lady Clarinda. I assure you he has a great deal to say for it. Well, next to him again, is Dr. Morbific, who has been all over the world to prove that there is no such thing as contagion; and has inoculated himself with plague, yellow fever, and every variety of pestilence, and is still alive to tell the story. I am very shy of him, too; for I look on him as a

¹ To go to the devil.

² Absent-minded.

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walking phial of wrath, corked full of all infections, and not to be touched without extreme hazard.

Captain Fitzchrome. This is the strangest fellow of all.

Lady Clarinda. Next to him sits Mr. Philpot, the geographer, who thinks of nothing but the heads and tails of rivers, and lays down the streams of Terra Incognita as accurately as if he had been there. He is a person of pleasant fancy, and makes a sort of fairyland of every country he touches, from the Frozen Ocean to the Deserts of Zahara.

Captain Fitzchrome. How does he settle matters with Mr. Firedamp?

Lady Clarinda. You see Mr. Firedamp has got as far as possible out of his way. Next to him is Sir Simon Steeltrap, of Steeltrap Lodge, Member for Crouching-Curtown, Justice of Peace for the county, and Lord of the United Manors of Spring-gun and Treadmill; a great preserver of game and public morals. By administering the laws which he assists in making, he disposes, at his pleasure, of the land and its live stock, including all the two-legged varieties, with and without feathers, in a circumference of several miles round Steeltrap Lodge. He has enclosed commons and woodlands; abolished cottage-gardens; taken the village cricket-ground into his own park, out of pure regard to the sanctity of Sunday; shut up foot-paths and alehouses (all but those which belong to his electioneering friend, Mr. Quassia, the brewer); put down fairs and fiddlers; committed many poachers; shot a few; convicted one third of the peasantry; suspected the rest; and passed nearly the whole of them through a wholesome course of prison discipline, which has finished their education at the expense of the county.

Captain Fitzchrome. He is somewhat out of his element here: among such a diversity of opinions he will hear some he will not like.

Lady Clarinda. It was rather ill-judged in Mr. Crotchet

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to invite him to-day. But the art of assorting company is above these *parvenus*. They invite a certain number of persons without considering how they harmonize with each other. Between Sir Simon and you is the Reverend Doctor Folliott. He is said to be an excellent scholar, and is fonder of books than the majority of his cloth; he is very fond, also, of the good things of this world. He is of an admirable temper, and says rude things in a pleasant half-earnest manner, that nobody can take offense with. And next to him, again, is one Captain Fitzchrome, who is very much in love with a certain person that does not mean to have anything to say to him, because she can better her fortune by taking somebody else.

Captain Fitzchrome. And next to him, again, is the beautiful, the accomplished, the witty, the fascinating, the tormenting Lady Clarinda, who traduces herself to the said captain, by assertions which it would drive him crazy to believe.

Lady Clarinda. Time will show, sir. And now we have gone the round of the table.

Captain Fitzchrome. But I must say, though I know you had always a turn for sketching characters, you surprise me by your observation, and especially by your attention to opinions.

Lady Clarinda. Well, I will tell you a secret: I am writing a novel.

Captain Fitzchrome. A novel!

Lady Clarinda. Yes, a novel. And I shall get a little finery by it: trinkets and fal-lals, which I cannot get from papa. You must know I have been reading several fashionable novels, the fashionable this, and the fashionable that; and I thought to myself, Why, I can do better than any of these myself. So I wrote a chapter or two, and sent them as a specimen to Mr. Puffall, the bookseller, telling him they were to be a part of the fashionable something or other, and he

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offered me, I will not say how much, to finish it in three volumes, and let him pay all the newspapers for recommending it as the work of a lady of quality who had made very free with the characters of her acquaintance.

Captain Fitzchrome. Surely you have not done so?

Lady Clarinda. Oh, no; I leave that to Mr. Eavesdrop. But Mr. Puffall made it a condition that I should let him say so.

Captain Fitzchrome. A strange recommendation.

Lady Clarinda. Oh, nothing else will do. And it seems you may give yourself any character you like, and the newspapers will print it as if it came from themselves. I have commended you to three of our friends here, as an economist, a transcendentalist, and a classical scholar; and if you wish to be renowned through the world for these, or any other accomplishments, the newspapers will confirm you in their possession for half-a-guinea a piece.

Captain Fitzchrome. Truly, the praise of such gentry must be a feather in any one's cap.

Lady Clarinda. So you will see, some morning, that my novel is "the most popular production of the day." This is Mr. Puffall's favorite phrase. He makes the newspapers say it of everything he publishes. But "the day," you know, is a very convenient phrase; it allows of three hundred and sixty-five "most popular productions" in a year. And in leap-year one more.

II

THEORIES

But when they came to shape the model,
Not one could fit the other's noddle.

—BUTLER

Meanwhile, the last course, and the dessert, passed by. When the ladies had withdrawn, young Crotchett addressed the company.

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Mr. Crochet, jun. There is one point in which philosophers of all classes seem to be agreed: that they only want money to regenerate the world.

Mr. Mac Quedy. No doubt of it. Nothing is so easy as to lay down the outlines of perfect society. There wants nothing but money to set it going. I will explain myself clearly and fully by reading a paper (*producing a large scroll*). "In the infancy of society——"

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Pray, Mr. Mac Quedy, how is it that all gentlemen of your nation begin everything they write with the "infancy of society"?

Mr. Mac Quedy. Eh, sir, it is the simplest way to begin at the beginning. "In the infancy of society, when government was invented to save a percentage; say two and a half per cent ——"

Rev. Dr. Folliott. I will not say any such thing.

Mr. Mac Quedy. Well, say any percentage you please.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. I will not say any percentage at all.

Mr. Mac Quedy. "On the principle of the division of labor——"

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Government was invented to spend a percentage.

Mr. Mac Quedy. To save a percentage.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. No, sir, to spend a percentage; and a good deal more than two and a half per cent. Two hundred and fifty per cent.; that is intelligible.

Mr. Mac Quedy. "In the infancy of society——"

Mr. Toogood. Never mind the infancy of society. The question is of society in its maturity. Here is what it should be (*producing a paper*). I have laid it down in a diagram.

Mr. Skionar. Before we proceed to the question of government, we must nicely discriminate the boundaries of sense, understanding, and reason. Sense is a receptivity——

Mr. Crotchet, jun. We are proceeding too fast. Money

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being all that is wanted to regenerate society, I will put into the hands of this company a large sum for the purpose.' Now let us see how to dispose of it.

Mr. Mac Quedy. We will begin by taking a committee-room in London, where we will dine together once a week, to deliberate.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. If the money is to go in deliberative dinners, you may set me down for a committee man and honorary caterer.

Mr. Mac Quedy. Next, you must all learn political economy, which I will teach you, very compendiously, in lectures over the bottle.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. I hate lectures over the bottle. But pray, sir, what is political economy?

Mr. Mac Quedy. Political economy is to the state what domestic economy is to the family.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. No such thing, sir. In the family there is a *paterfamilias*, who regulates the distribution, and takes care that there shall be no such thing in the household as one dying of hunger, while another dies of surfeit. In the state it is all hunger at one end, and all surfeit at the other. Matchless claret, Mr. Crotchet.

Mr. Crotchet. Vintage of 'fifteen, doctor.

Mr. Mac Quedy. The family consumes, and so does the state.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Consumes, sir! Yes; but the mode, the proportions; there is the essential difference between the state and the family. Sir, I hate false analogies.

Mr. Mac Quedy. Well, sir, the analogy is not essential. Distribution will come under its proper head.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Come where it will, the distribution of the state is in no respect analogous to the distribution of the family. The *paterfamilias*, sir: the *paterfamilias*.

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Mr. Mac Quedy. Well, sir, let that pass. The family consumes, and in order to consume, it must have supply.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Well, sir, Adam and Eve knew that, when they dived and span.

Mr. Mac Quedy. Very true, sir (*reproducing his scroll*). "In the infancy of society——"

Mr. Toogood. The reverend gentleman has hit the nail on the head. It is the distribution that must be looked to: it is the *paterfamilias* that is wanting in the state. Now here I have provided him (*reproducing his diagram*).

Mr. Trillo. Apply the money, sir, to building and endowing an opera house, where the ancient altar of Bacchus may flourish, and justice may be done to sublime compositions (*producing a part of a manuscript opera*).

Mr. Skionar. No, sir, build *sacella*¹ for transcendental oracles to teach the world how to see through a glass darkly (*producing a scroll*).

Mr. Trillo. See through an opera-glass brightly.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. See through a wine-glass, full of claret: then you see both darkly and brightly. But, gentlemen, if you are all in the humor for reading papers, I will read you the first half of my next Sunday's sermon (*producing a paper*).

Omnes. No sermon! No sermon!

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Then I move that our respective papers be committed to our respective pockets.

Mr. Mac Quedy. Political economy is divided into two great branches, production and consumption.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Yes, sir; there are two great classes of men: those who produce much and consume little; and those who consume much and produce nothing. The *fruges consumere nati*² have the best of it. Eh, captain! you remember the characteristics of a great man according to Aristophanes:

¹ Little chapels.

² Those born to consume.

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ὅστις γε πίνειν οἶδε καὶ βινεῖν μόνον.¹ Ha! ha! ha! Well, captain, even in these tight-laced days, the obscurity of a learned language allows a little pleasantry.

Captain Fitzchrome. Very true, sir: the pleasantry and the obscurity go together: they are all one, as it were;—to me at any rate (*aside*).

Mr. Mac Quedy. Now, sir——

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Pray, sir, let your science alone, or you will put me under the painful necessity of demolishing it bit by bit, as I have done your exordium. I will undertake it any morning; but it is too hard exercise after dinner.

Mr. Mac Quedy. Well, sir, in the meantime, I hold my science established.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. And I hold it demolished.

Mr. Crotchet, jun. Pray, gentlemen, pocket your manuscripts; fill your glasses; and consider what we shall do with our money.

Mr. Mac Quedy. Build lecture rooms and schools for all.

Mr. Trillo. Revive the Athenian theater: regenerate the lyrical drama.

Mr. Toogood. Build a grand co-operative parallelogram, with a steam-engine in the middle for a maid of all work.

Mr. Firedamp. Drain the country, and get rid of *malaria*, by abolishing duck-ponds.

Dr. Morbific. Found a philanthropic college of anti-contagionists, where all the members shall be inoculated with the virus of all known diseases. Try the experiment on a grand scale.

Mr. Chainmail. Build a great dining-hall: endow it with beef and ale, and hang the hall round with arms to defend the provisions.

Mr. Henbane. Found a toxicological institution for trying all poisons and antidotes. I myself have killed a frog twelve

¹ To know how to drink wine and to know how to make love.

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times, and brought him to life eleven; but the twelfth time he died. I have a phial of the drug which killed him in my pocket, and shall not rest till I have discovered its antidote.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. I move that the last speaker be dispossessed of his phial, and that it be forthwith thrown into the Thames.

Mr. Henbane. How, sir? my invaluable, and in the present state of human knowledge, infallible poison?

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Let the frogs have all the advantage of it.

Mr. Crotchet. Consider, doctor, the fish might participate. Think of the salmon.

Rev. Dr. Follitt. Then let the owner's right-hand neighbor swallow it.

Mr. Eavesdrop. Me, sir! What have I done, sir, that I am to be poisoned, sir?

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Sir, you have published a character of your facetious friend, the Reverend Doctor F., wherein you have sketched off me; me, sir, even to my nose and wig. What business have the public with my nose and wig?

Mr. Eavesdrop. Sir, it is all good humored: all in *bon-homie*:¹ all friendly and complimentary.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Sir, the bottle, *la Dive Bouteille*,² is a recondite oracle, which makes an Eleusinian temple of the circle in which it moves. He who reveals its mysteries must die. Therefore, let the dose be administered. *Fiat experimentum in anima vili*.³

Mr. Eavesdrop. Sir, you are very facetious at my expense.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Sir, you have been very unfacetious, very inficete⁴ at mine. You have dished me up, like a savory omelette, to gratify the appetite of the reading rabble for

¹ Genial sport.

² The divine bottle.

³ Let the experiment be made upon a worthless life.

⁴ Stupid.

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gossip. The next time, sir, I will respond with the *argumentum baculinum*.¹ Print that, sir; put it on record as a promise of the Reverend Doctor F., which shall be most faithfully kept, with an exemplary bamboo.

Mr. Eavesdrop. Your cloth protects you, sir.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. My bamboo shall protect me, sir.

Mr. Crotchet. Doctor, doctor, you are growing too polemical.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Sir, my blood boils. What business have the public with my nose and wig?

Mr. Crotchet. Doctor! Doctor!

Mr. Crotchet, jun. Pray, gentlemen, return to the point. How shall we employ our fund?

Mr. Philpot. Surely in no way so beneficially as in exploring rivers. Send a fleet of steamboats down the Niger, and another up the Nile. So shall you civilize Africa, and establish stocking factories in Abyssinia and Bambo.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. With all submission, breeches and petticoats must precede stockings. Send out a crew of tailors. Try if the king of Bambo will invest in inexpressibles.

Mr. Crotchet, jun. Gentlemen, it is not for partial, but for general benefit, that this fund is proposed: a grand and universally applicable scheme for the amelioration of the condition of man.

Several Voices. That is my scheme. I have not heard a scheme but my own that has a grain of common sense.

Mr. Trillo. Gentlemen, you inspire me. Your last exclamation runs itself into a chorus, and sets itself to music. Allow me to lead, and to hope for your voices in harmony.

"After careful meditation,
And profound deliberation,

¹ The argument of the cudgel.

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On the various pretty projects which have just been shown,
Not a scheme in agitation,
For the world's amelioration,
Has a grain of common sense in it, except my own."

Several Voices. We are not disposed to join in any such chorus.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Well, of all these schemes, I am for Mr. Trillo's. Regenerate the Athenian theater. My classical friend here, the captain, will vote with me.

Captain Fitzchrome. I, sir? oh! of course, sir.

Mr. Mac Quedy. Surely, captain, I rely on you to uphold political economy.

Captain Fitzchrome. Me, sir? oh! to be sure, sir.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Pray, sir, will political economy uphold the Athenian theater?

Mr. Mac Quedy. Surely not. It would be a very unproductive investment.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Then the captain votes against you. What, sir, did not the Athenians, the wisest of nations, appropriate to their theater their most sacred and intangible¹ fund? Did not they give to melopœia, choregraphy, and the sundry forms of didascalics, the precedence of all other matters, civil and military? Was it not their law, that even the proposal to divert this fund to any other purpose should be punished with death? But, sir, I further propose that the Athenian theater being resuscitated, the admission shall be free to all who can expound the Greek choruses, constructively, mythologically, and metrically, and to none others. So shall all the world learn Greek: Greek, the Alpha and Omega of all knowledge. At him who sits not in the theater, shall be pointed the finger of scorn: he shall be called in the highway of the city "a fellow without Greek."

Mr. Trillo. But the ladies, sir, the ladies.

¹ Not to be "touched," or drawn upon.

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Rev. Dr. Folliott. Every man may take in a lady: and she who can construe and metricize a chorus shall, if she so please, pass in by herself.

Mr. Trillo. But, sir, you will shut me out of my own theater. Let there at least be a double passport, Greek and Italian.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. No, sir; I am inexorable. No Greek, no theater.

Mr. Trillo. Sir, I cannot consent to be shut out from my own theater.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. You see how it is, Squire Crotchet the younger; you can scarcely find two to agree on a scheme, and no two of those can agree on the details. Keep your money in your pocket. And so ends the fund for regenerating the world.

Mr. Mac Quedy. Nay, by no means. We are all agreed on deliberative dinners.

Rev. Dr. Folliott. Very true; we will dine and discuss. We will sing with Robin Hood: "If I drink water while this doth last"; and while it lasts we will have no adjournment, if not to the Athenian theater.

Mr. Trillo. Well, gentlemen, I hope this chorus at least will please you:

"If I drink water while this doth last,
May I never again drink wine:

For how can a man, in his life of a span,
Do anything better than dine?

We'll dine and drink, and say if we think
That anything better can be;

And when we have dined, wish all mankind
May dine as well as we.

"And though a good wish will fill no dish,
And brim no cup with sack,

Yet thoughts will spring, as the glasses ring,
To illumine our studious track.

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On the brilliant dreams of our hopeful schemes
The light of the flask shall shine;
And we'll sit till day, but we'll find the way
To drench the world with wine."

The schemes for the world's regeneration evaporated in a
tumult of voices.

End

